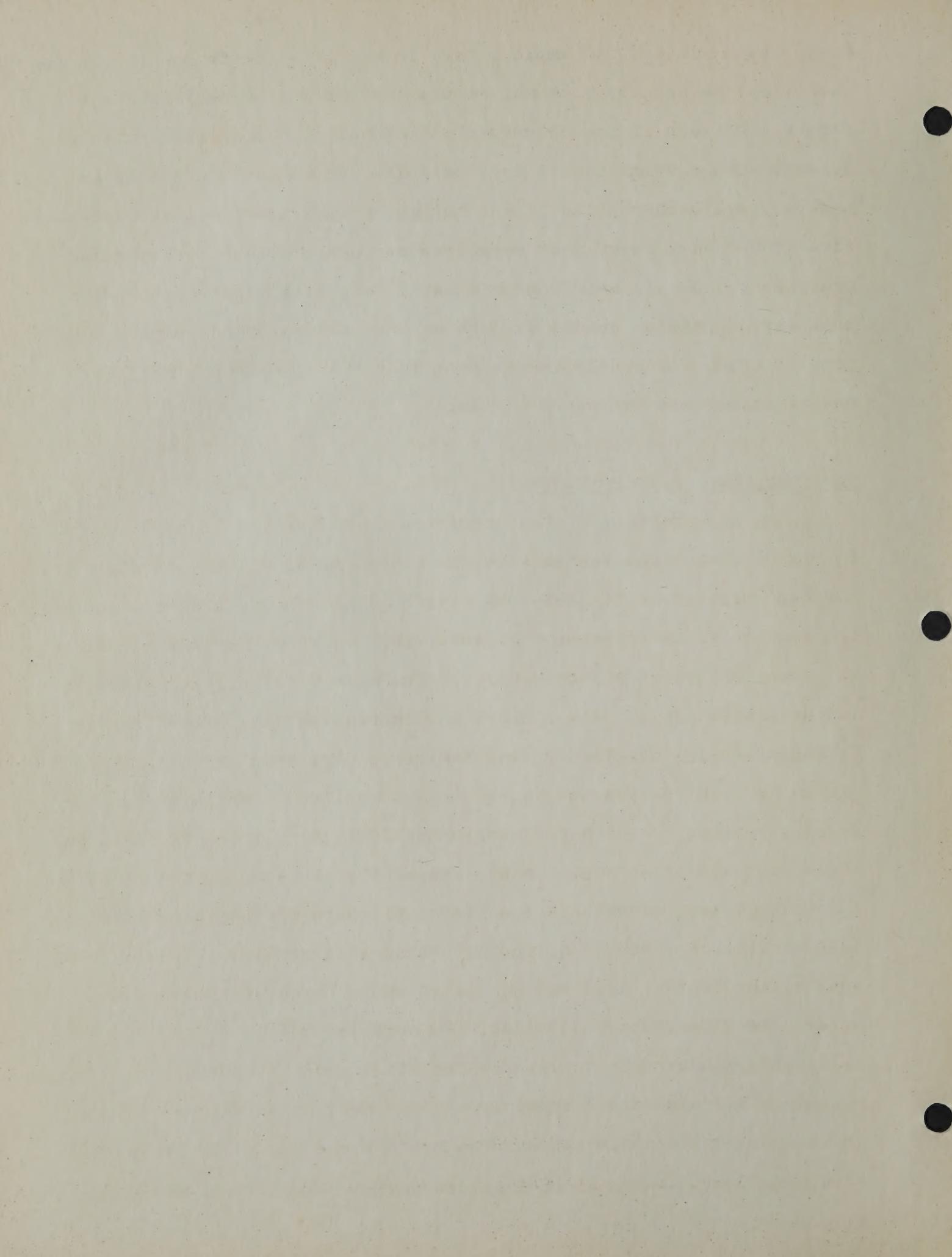


Never having entered a temple before in his life (he is now in the far seventies) he was about to refuse the invitation. When Polstein the former president of the congregation learned of Margolies' attitude he went with a committee to urge Margolies to consent to act as an honorary pallbearer since it was not as an individual but as representative of Orthodox Jewry that Margolies had been invited. Having such pressure brought to bear upon him Rabbi Margolies began hunting for some way of getting around the ban against all reformed temples. He finally found a loophole in the fact that the Temple had not yet been dedicated and was therefore no temple.

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Thursday, September 26, 1929

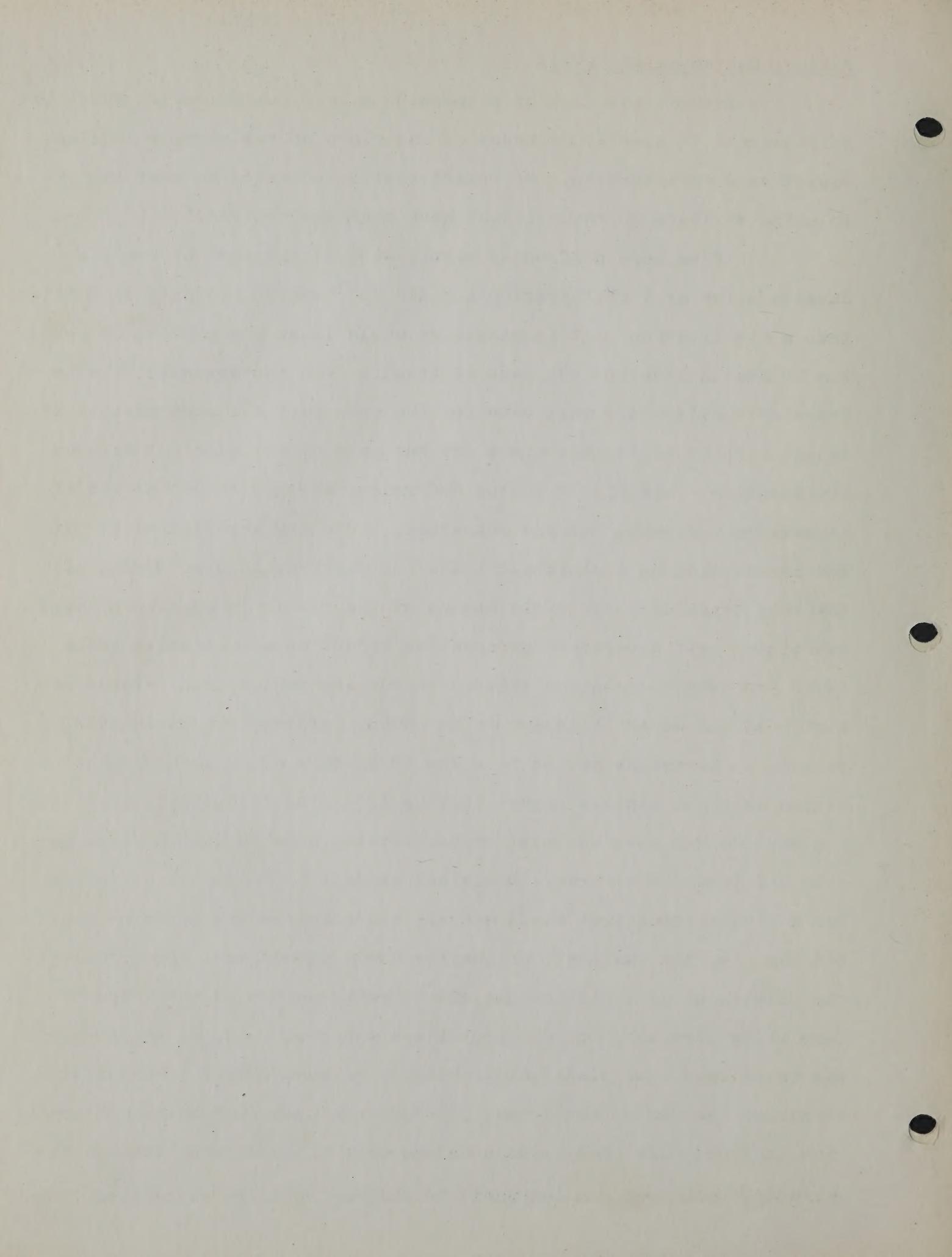
At a meeting of the committee to advise the young Braunstein in his work with the Jewish students at Columbia, which took place at the Men's Faculty Club yesterday at 5:30 I met Judge Cardozo with whom I had quite an interesting chat about the Seminary. He was surprised to learn that the Seminary permitted the modern scientific spirit to invade its courses. He was under the impression that Sobato Morais' Orthodoxy still prevailed in the Seminary. Speaking for himself he could hardly conceive how young men who received a college training could submit to the Orthodox version of Judaism, but in all these years since the days of Morais, Cardozo apparently never took the trouble to find out whether any changes had taken place in the Seminary. He said that he had been brought up in the Orthodox spirit and in the observance of the dietary laws but he stated apologetically that he had strayed very far from those laws. He recalled, he said, the reason H. Pereira Mendes used to advance for his strenuous opposition to having men and women seated together at services. When the Israelites crossed the Red Sea the men sang separately and the women separately. This fact meant to Mendes that it was God's will that men and women should sit apart in the synagogue.



Friday, September 27, 1929

Even at the risk of repeating myself I must resort again to this journal to clarify my ideas on the place of religion in Judaism viewed as a civilization. My belief that I succeeded at last in formulating my ideas on that subject have been short lived.

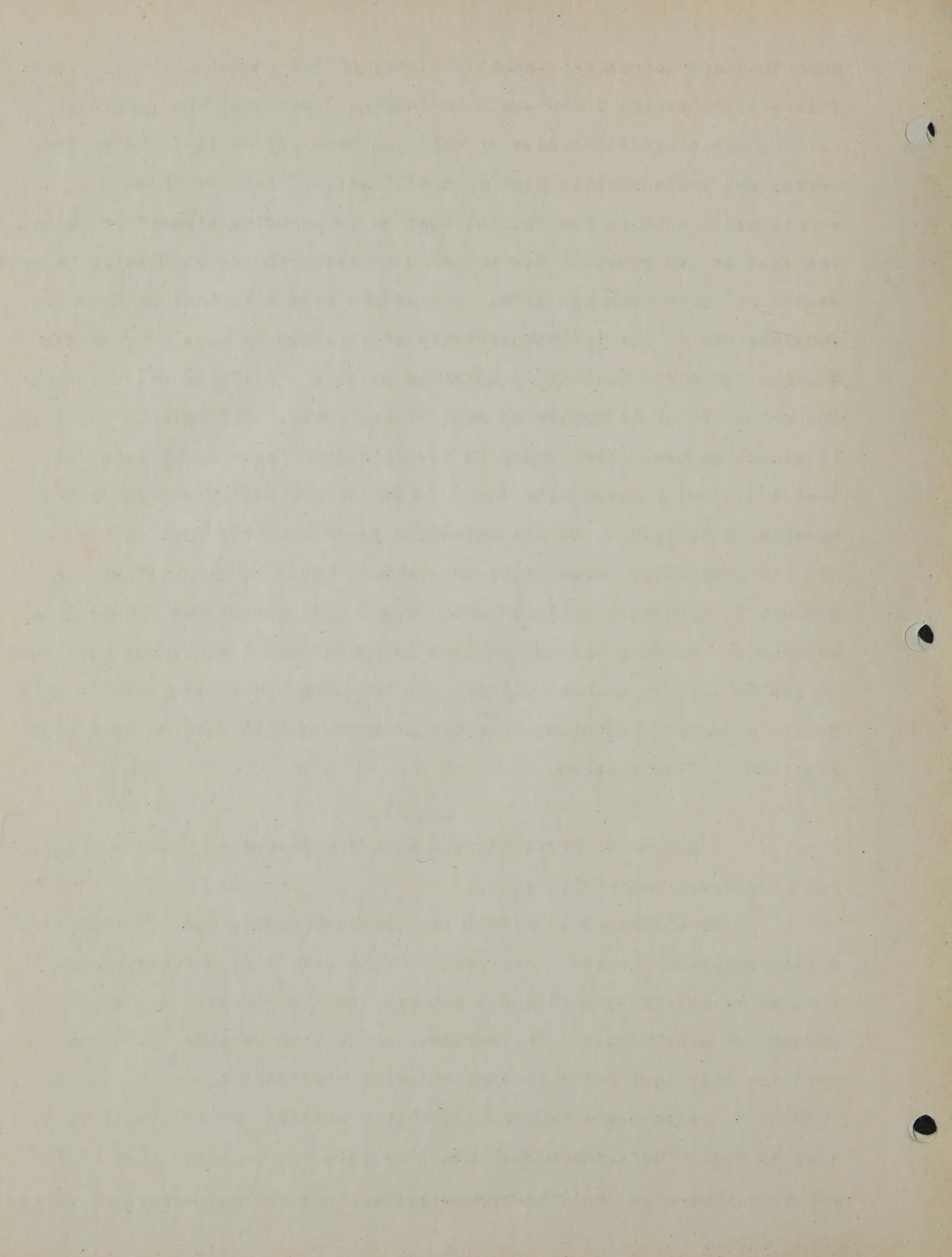
If we were confronted merely with the problem of keeping Judaism alive as a civilization and did not have to reconstruct Judaism into a civilization that is modern we would leave the problem of religion in Jewish life to take care of itself. One can ~~xxx~~ subscribe to Orthodox theology and cultivate for the most part all such aspects of Jewish life as would make him a Jew not only by religion but also by civilization. Likewise with the Reformist theology, so far as its affirmations concerning God are concerned. One may accept them in toto and in addition be a nationalist Jew for whatever in the Reformist theology bears upon the civic status of the Jew or is opposed to Jews exercising self government or creative effort on a collective scale is in the nature of obiter dicta. As for the radical who regards religion either as an illusion or as having outlived its usefulness, so long as he thinks he can be a Jew in so many other ways besides religion we might express regret that he is acting illogically and missing what we may deem the most characteristic note in Jewish civilization and leave it at that. But since we want to formulate a program for a civilization that shall satisfy the requirements of being continuous with its own past, of obeying the psychological and sociological principles of civilizations and of being modern in the sense of permitting diversity in religious ideas and practices, we cannot evade the question. What place shall religion as such occupy in the next stages of the Jewish civilization? The requirement of being continuous with the past must lead us to conclude that a Jewish civilization in which the religious element would be omitted would be so novel an



that the main incentive - habit not only of the individual but of the folk - to remaining a Jew would be lacking. Secondly the psychological and sociological studies of religion have proved it to be an integral and indispensable part of civilization. Both of these compel us to apprise the radical that he is deluding himself in thinking that he can remain a Jew or bring up his children as Jews if he omit Jewish religion from his life. But at the same time that we have to convince him of the indispensability of religion we have to convince him and ourselves that it is possible to have a religion which accepts the principle of tolerance as part of its creed. This kind of religion is something new. Its novelty in the opinion of some constitutes no less a violent a break with the Judaism of the past than the entire absence of religion. We are therefore faced with the task of proving the apparently paradoxical proposition that Jewish civilization can not do without a religion which shall incorporate the principle of tolerance. Because the proposition is paradoxical we cannot hope that it can be left to chance. If we fail to demonstrate its truth it will not be accepted, and without it the attempt to live Judaism as a civilization will be wrecked.

I am not at all satisfied with the foregoing. The thought is too involved. Let me try again.

We assume that neither the Orthodox conception of Judaism as a supernaturally revealed religion nor the Reformist conception of Judaism as religious philosophy can provide the Jew with a plausible program of Jewish life. The Orthodox conception regards as a true religion only that which is supernaturally revealed. According to the Reformist conception a true religion is a religion based upon a true idea of God. They both agree that a religion to be valid must be true, and since there can only be one truth there can be only one true relig-



ion. That conception of religion reduces the principle of tolerance an inescapable modus vivendi. - No good.

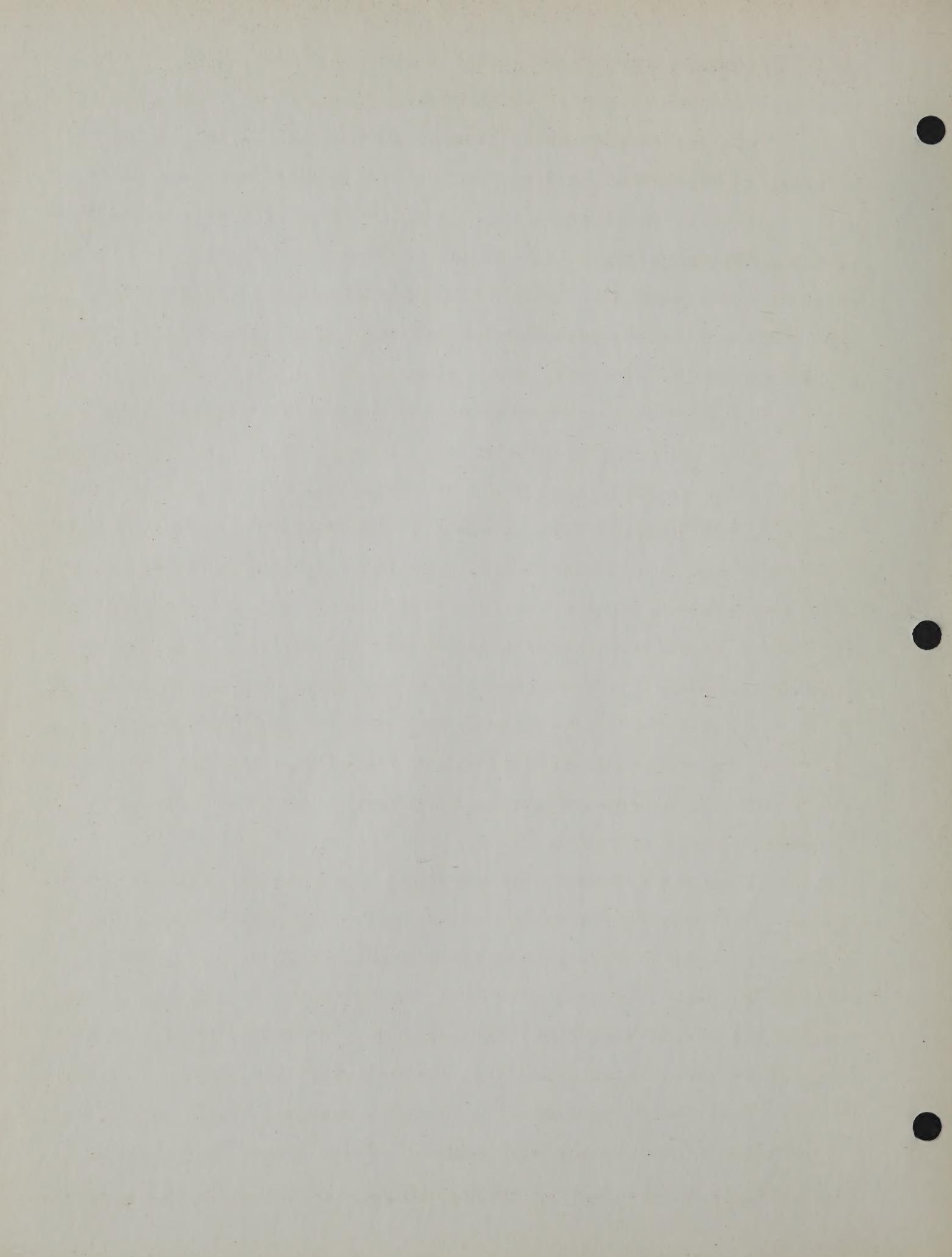
In reconstructing Judaism as a modern civilization the most perplexing problem we have to deal with is to determine the place of religion in it. The factors that complicate the problem are the same as those that complicate the problem of church and state. 1. The necessity of having a religion if the civilization is to conform to the conclusion of the psychological study of religion. 2. The necessity of reckoning with diversity of opinion.

The solution consists in adopting the distinction between folk religion and personal religion.

The psychological study of religion discloses the fact that in all religion there is the element of appreciation other than that of an esthetic type - sacredness. The sense of the sacred has produced values in its own right apart from being an incentive to esthetic values. A civilization must possess objects which for its adherents possess the element of sacredness. It must have places, heroes, events which furnish it with occasions for celebration and apotheosis.

This psychological aspect of religion will help us understand the problem of church and state. Civilizations recognizing to what extent the sense of the sacred contributed to their perpetuations cultivated specific objects as occasions for celebration. The confusion of peoples ultimately led to the break up of ancient civilization and the attempt to establish a Roman civilization - Christianity. The visible Church is the de 2171 of the Roman Empire. The states represent the rise of new civilizations. The two systems of sancta under which most people live nowadays. Protestantism illogical.

The suggested solution is the recognition that a person may observe two or more systems of sancta. Folk religions must adopt tolerance not merely as an inevitable policy, but as an ethical principle, etc.



Saturday night, September 28, 1929

At the services today there were about 75. Instead of preaching I read the translation of selections from the portion of the work and of the Haftarah(p.171).

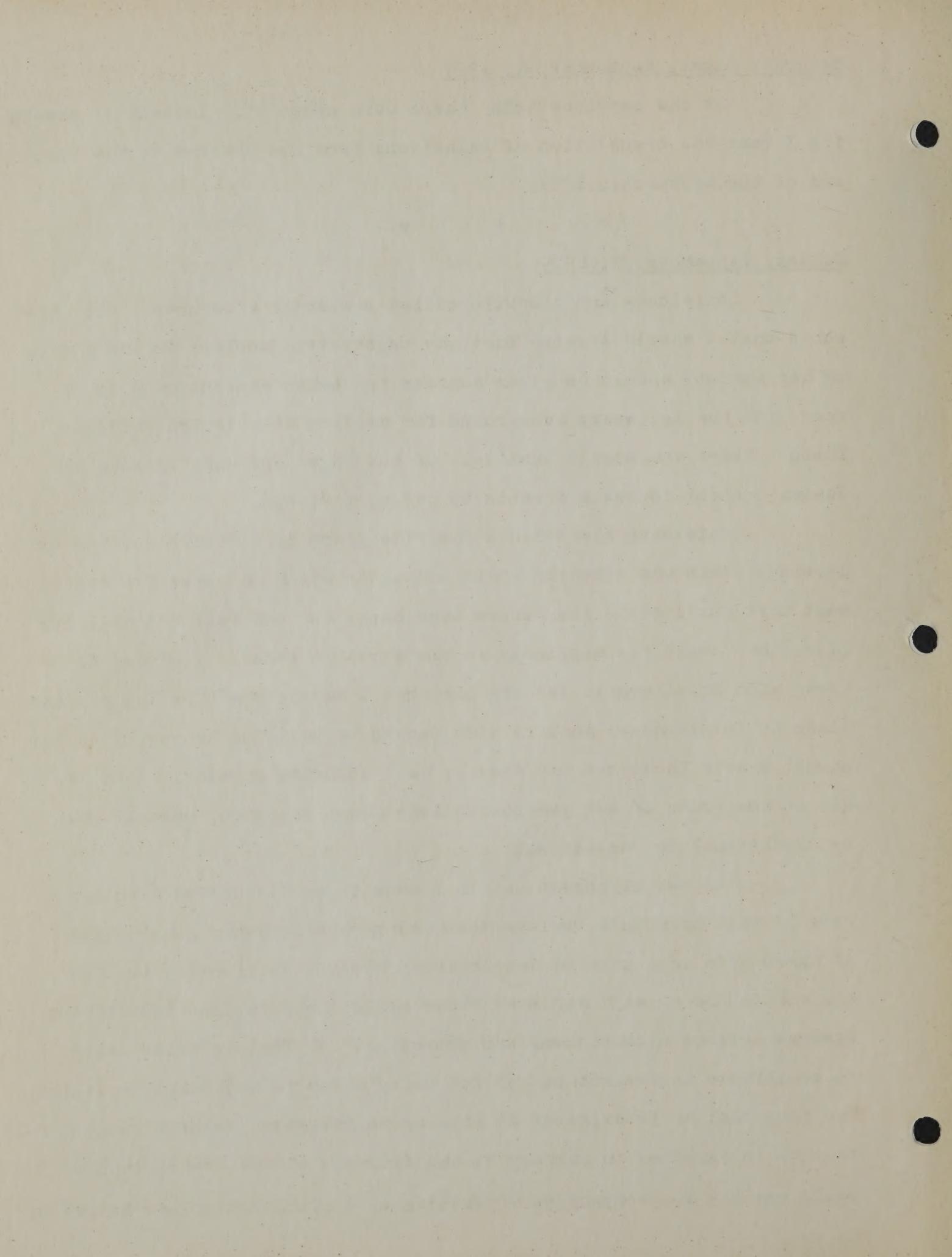
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Sunday, September 29, 1929

Spielberg and his wife called yesterday afternoon. His wife wants that I should arrange that the psychiatric workers in the employ of her society should be given courses in Jewish content to provide them with the necessary background for dealing with Jewish children. These workers are mostly gentile. Of the three who want to take the Jewish content course one wants to become a Jewess.

Spielberg started his favorite sport of religion baiting by quoting Pitkin who recently wrote a book in which he makes the statement that until now a few people were happy and the rest had religion (i.e. they hoped for happiness in the world to come). I minced no words with Spielberg in telling him that I have a right to lay greater claim to intellectual honesty with regard to religion because I do not permit myself to be carried away by well sounding phrases. I try to get at the truth of all generalizations about religion, whether they be traditional or sensational.

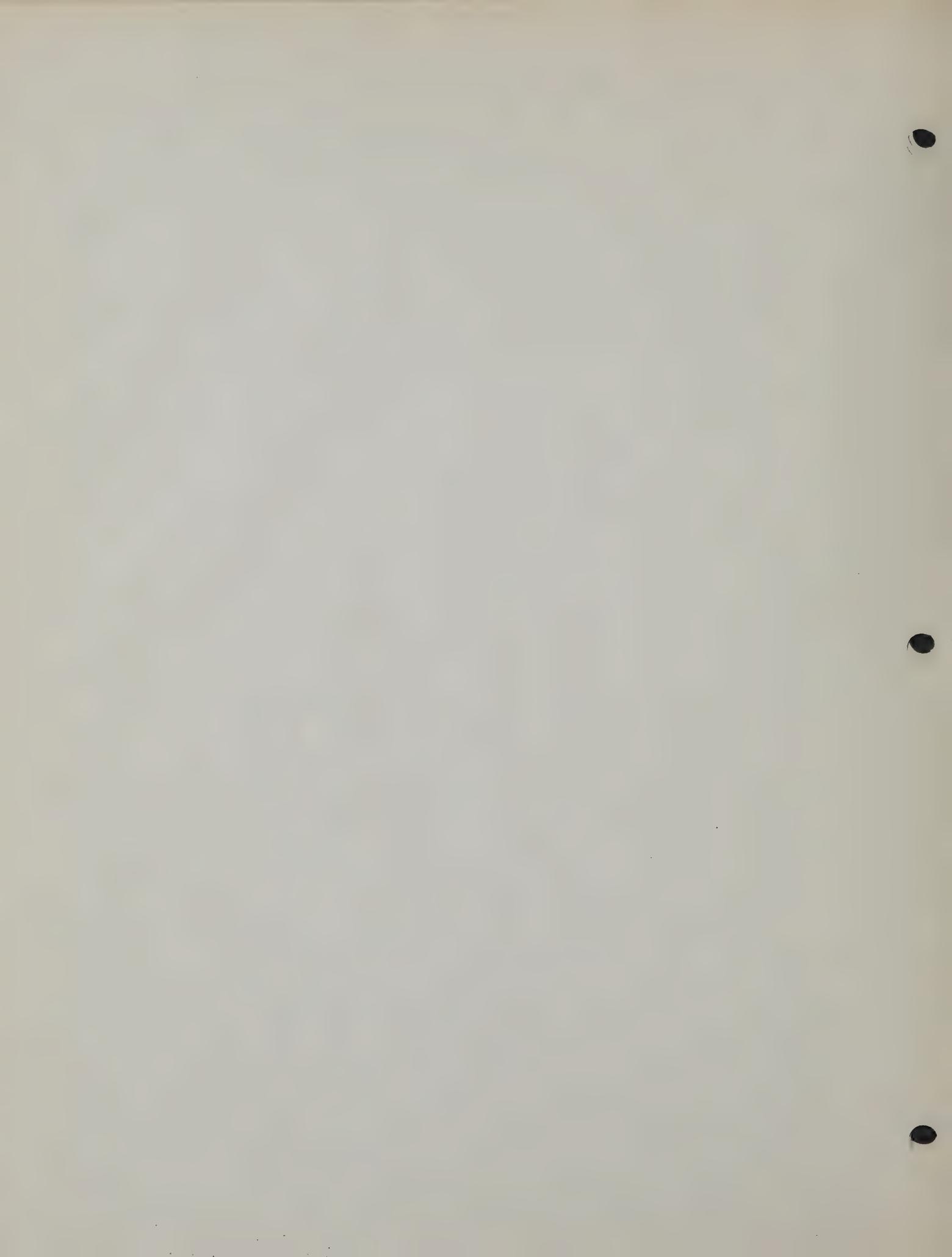
The two strongest points I made in my discussion with him were 1) that he should realize that religion like every other phase of human life is a growing developing process. To identify it with ancient taboos or with medieval other worldliness is like identifying ~~xxxxxx~~ science with alchemy and astrology. 2) That in being asked to contribute to Kashrut he was not being asked to help along religion. The fact that he is expected to live up to ~~xxxxxx~~ Kashrut means merely that he is expected to conform to the folkways of the Jewish people. I could see how the conception of Judaism as a civilization has helped me



to pin, as it were, both his shoulders to the floor so that he couldn't budge and had to admit defeat.

But the very strength of that conception may prove its greatest weakness, for if we should not be able to have Palestine as our homeland there can be no Judaism. Recent events in Palestine having somewhat shaken my faith in a Jewish future I find it very difficult to carry on as rabbi and teacher of Judaism. To escape the mental torture I undergo in trying to suppress my doubts I would like to make connections with a man like Spielberg who has organized a new enterprise in the insurance business. With my weakness for making use of every possible means to drive a point home I showed him what I had written in this journal on Sept. 7 and my reference there to him. I wish I was sure of his reliability. He protests his honesty too much although it may be that this protesting is part of his general tendency to speak unreservedly about himself. In the last four years he said he made three and a half million dollars, and that his living expenses amounted to \$100,000 a year. I have never heard anyone speak so frankly about his financial status and annual expenditures, nor anyone regard himself as so well adjusted to life as Spielberg does. A few years ago they were practically penniless, having lost not only their own money, but that of many of their friends who had invested in his financial undertakings.

Jewish life as a cultural product and force still has some interest for him. But to his children it means nothing more than the course of their not being wanted in gentile society. He is conscious of the fact that habit and early Jewish environment are the cause of the interest he takes in things Jewish. With that cause absent in the lives of his children, he does not expect Judaism to be perpetual through them or their like. He included my children among their like. I am afraid he was not altogether wrong. Judith, for instance, doesn't

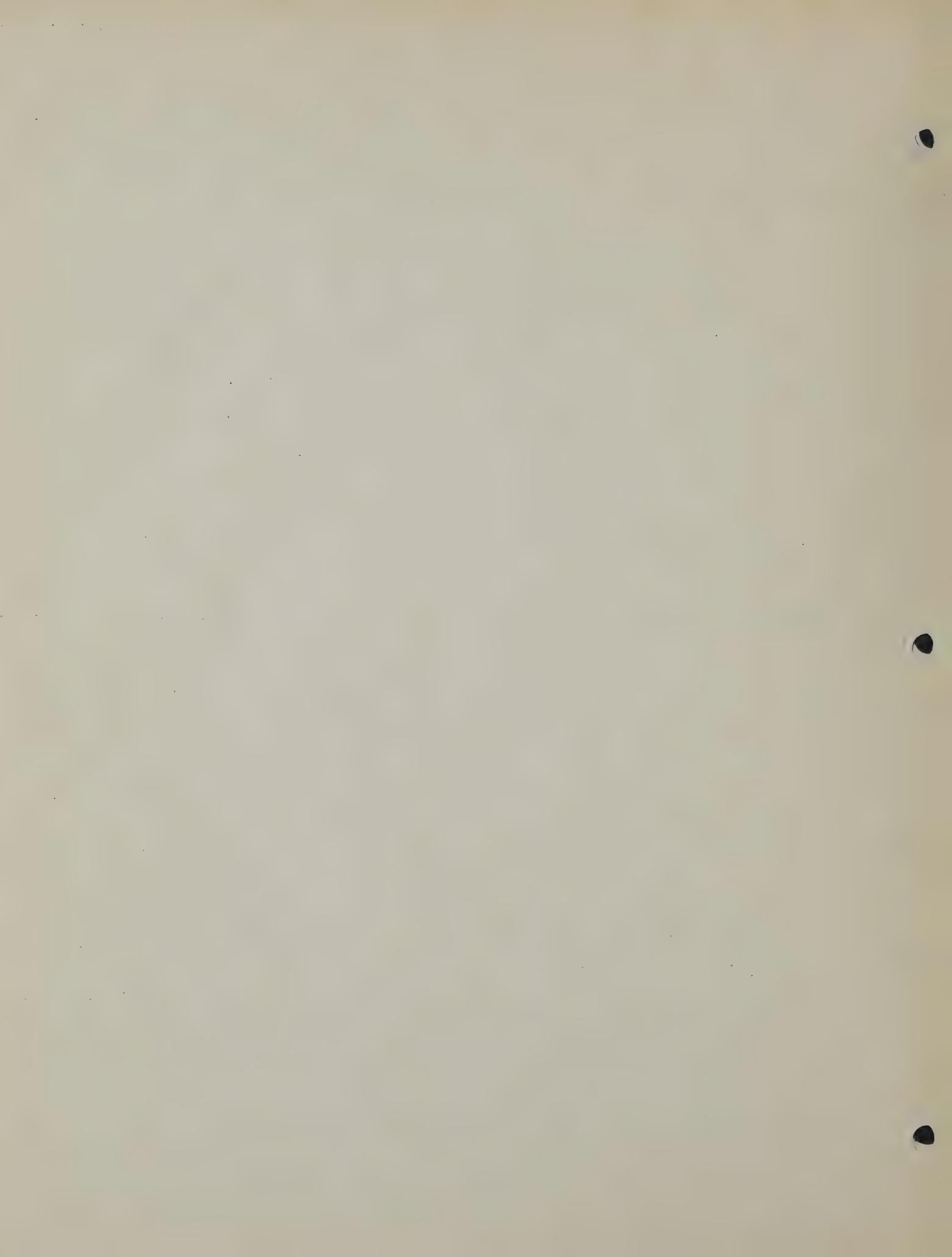


evince the least desire to continue Jewish studies or to read Hebrew books. Naomi doesn't say much but her attitude toward the synagogue and its associations is negative. Hadassah and Selma include Judaism among the nuisances to which they have to submit.

Just as the Spielbergs were on the point of leaving a Mrs. Julian called. She had a friend of hers with her. Both of them came in behalf of the Junior Hadassah to get my advice with regard to a cultural program they wish to introduce into their activities. They want to institute a sort of correspondence course for young people in towns where there are no facilities for acquiring any Jewish knowledge, and to arrange with Jewish educational agencies in the larger cities to encourage the members of the Junior Hadassah in their efforts to acquire some Jewish knowledge. The inducement method the Junior Hadassah expects to hold out is the award of Hebrew letters analogous to the PBK.

After floundering about in the search for some concrete suggestion I hit upon the thought that if they want to succeed the primary condition is to get some one person who will give all of his time to working out syllabi of studies. I suggested as the best men I could think of for that purpose Eugene Kohn and Max Kadushin.

After having allowed a few weeks to pass without donning my tefillin I put them on this morning, and wore them during the time that I studied a page or so in Sanhedrin. I could dismiss the pleasure I derive from the resumption of Jewish practice and study as due to inbred habit. But what is habit? In the light of the idea I am at work on at the present time habit is a form of memory which prevents the past from vanishing completely. Habit thus disproves the heresy of the pessimist that life is vanity.



Rabbis Signer and Grossman asked to be allowed to come in on the sermons that I am working out for the coming holidays. Although I tired of them last year and found some excuse for discontinuing their participation in my work I did not have the heart to refuse them this time. The reason I tired of them was that they seldom contributed an idea to the sermons that I worked out. They do not seem to have improved in that respect since I last saw them.

I cannot but marvel at Grossman's ability to bear the blows of fortune with remarkable equanimity. He had invested all his fortune -- about \$55,000 in his summer camp -- and this summer about seventy of the campers were struck down by typhoid and about six or seven died. His three children were all at the Haifa school during the pogroms in Palestine; at the same time that the papers were broadcasting the plague among his campers. Withal that he seems to have lost little of his innocent cheerfulness in which he always seemed to abound. Truth to tell, I do not know whether that cheerfulness is anything more than a natural simplicity due to a lack of nerve or gland development rather than to any conscious philosophy of life.

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Monday, September 30, 1929

Last night I met Dr. Zwisohn at the engagement party of Abe Liebovitz's daughter. He is a physician who in his youth was probably a "yeshiba bahur" and who has the earmarks of an old time maskil. Though a professed antagonist of religion he is an ardent naturalist. He was in Palestine recently leaving it just a few days before the Arab riots. What he said to me when I saw him last night is significant. He confirmed the fact that is now generally known that many days before the outbreak came everyone in Palestine felt that it was coming. But, he added, this outbreak was providential. If it had not occurred at this time, and if order had been maintained for the next ten years the plan of the British officials to have Palestine entirely an Arab country

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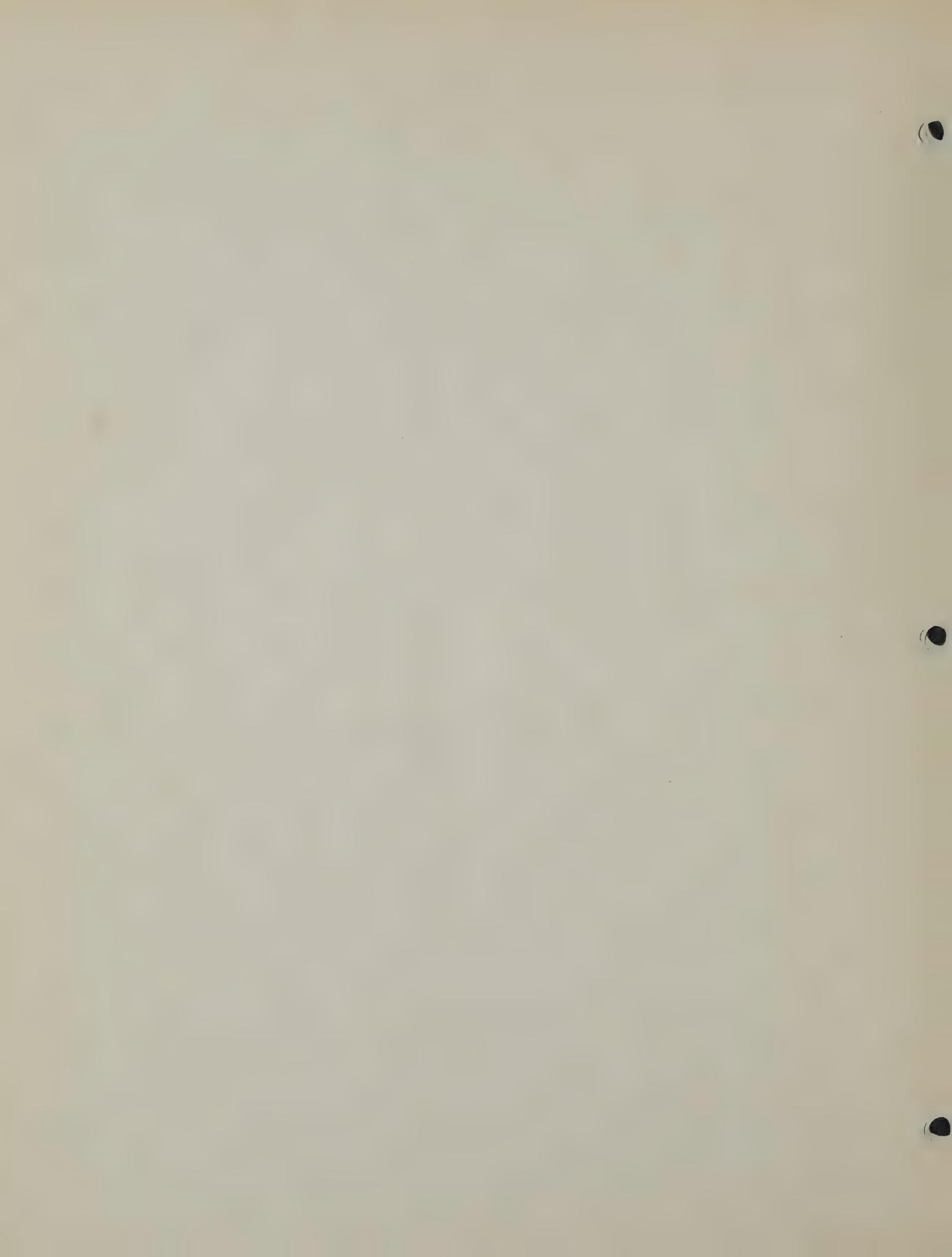
would have been completely effectuated.

This morning Rabbi Levine, Messrs. Brogin, Dinin and I met to discuss what we should demand of Dr. Benderly in order that the graduates of the Hebrew High School qualify for the Teachers Institute. Brogin unfolded a tale of chaos that exists in the High School as a result of the so-called Dalton method which has been introduced there without the necessary text books and facilities that that method demands. We decided that we shall demand that during the last two years of the High School course those who are likely to qualify for entrance into the TI should be given a curriculum of studies in line with our requirements for admission. Levine and Dinin wanted me to take up the question of the K'vuzah and to insist that Benderly should not be permitted to select the best of the senior and junior classes in the High School for the group which he himself wants to train.

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Tuesday, October 1, 1929

Yesterday the painter Tepper called. He asked me to write a letter to Miss Szold to sit for a painting he wants to make of her. She is now in the country and he wants to seize the opportunity. When I showed him the plastiline bust I modeled of ~~my~~ father he pointed out the faults in it. I at once took to remodeling it. Faults or no faults before I started remodeling it it bore a perfect resemblance to father. Since yesterday I spent about twelve or thirteen hours on it. I was up till 3:30 in the morning. I simply could not tear myself away from it until I managed to retrieve the resemblance to father, and in this I succeeded only by restoring the very face lines that Tepper criticised most severely as not being human. I wish my literary tasks and studies could have such a grip on me as this modeling.



As I read the various reports and discussions of the massacres in Palestine I am beginning to be hopeful as to the ultimate outcome of the present crisis. Benderly and Zwisohn were perfectly right in their opinion that the massacres have strengthened the position of the Jews in Palestine. They have not only focussed the attention of the world upon Palestine but they have brought to the fore new intellectual forces to the support of the Jews in their effort to rebuild the Land. Bernard Flexner in this week's Nation, William Schack in the October issue of Current History and Abe Cahan in the Jewish Vorwaerts are new personalities explaining Zionism. The tales of heroism demonstrated during the massacres will form a second book of Judges. I pray to God for strength to go on with my tasks and for unshakable faith in Israel's future.

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Wednesday, October 2, 1929

I shall try another tack in the discussion of Jewish religion.

The crisis in Jewish religion is a phase of the general crisis in religion today. Our interpretation of the crisis will depend upon our conception of religion. If we take the traditional attitude that men have religion because God revealed himself in some supernatural fashion then we must attribute the indifference to religion as due to the depravity of human nature. If on the other hand we assume that religion is nothing but a delusion and a misinterpretation of natural phenomena then we will view the crisis as the dawn of intellectual emancipation. But there is a third conception of religion. We may regard it as the sum of representative and symbolic ideas by which men in accordance with their knowledge and intellectual development try to express the intuition that the world is so constituted as to lead to the achievement of personality and self-fulfillment of those who know how to adjust themselves to this fact about the world. This is the view of all who take an affirmative attitude toward religion but who



cannot subscribe to the assumptions of tradition. In Jewish life this may be said to be the avowed attitude of the Reformist group, though they like to play with the term revelation. From the standpoint of this conception the present crisis in religion marks the birth pangs of a new stage in its development, understanding by the development of religion a process of change corresponding to the changes which take place in the other aspects of human life. If we want to direct the course of religion in the future it is necessary to reckon with some of the psychological laws of religion, with human behavior as it expresses itself in the beliefs and practices that we identify as religion. This involves knowing what conditions of human life contribute to what may be regarded as the normal functioning of religion. (This presupposes a description of the normal functioning of religion) and what conditions are responsible for the present crisis. We shall then be able to indicate what conditions we must aim to bring about in order to restore religion to its normal functioning.

The beliefs and practices which center about God, a god or gods have originally as their purpose to enable man to make the world into a home and to help him to feel at home in the world, i.e. to transform the environment and to accept the environment. The first purpose is part of magic (which lies outside as well as within the field of religion. The second purpose belongs to the province of values (which province also extends beyond religion, where it is called esthetics. In religion the values are those of holiness). (Develop the meaning of values.) In primitive society where all think and act alike all are interested in achieving these two purposes of religion in the same way. Religion is therefore collective in character. ~~If~~ It is the folk type. We understand by folk that cultural unit whether it be tribe, clan or nation from which the individual receives his spiritual and intellectual nurture. Religion is normal when the religion which the individual practices coincides with the religion he believes in wholeheartedly

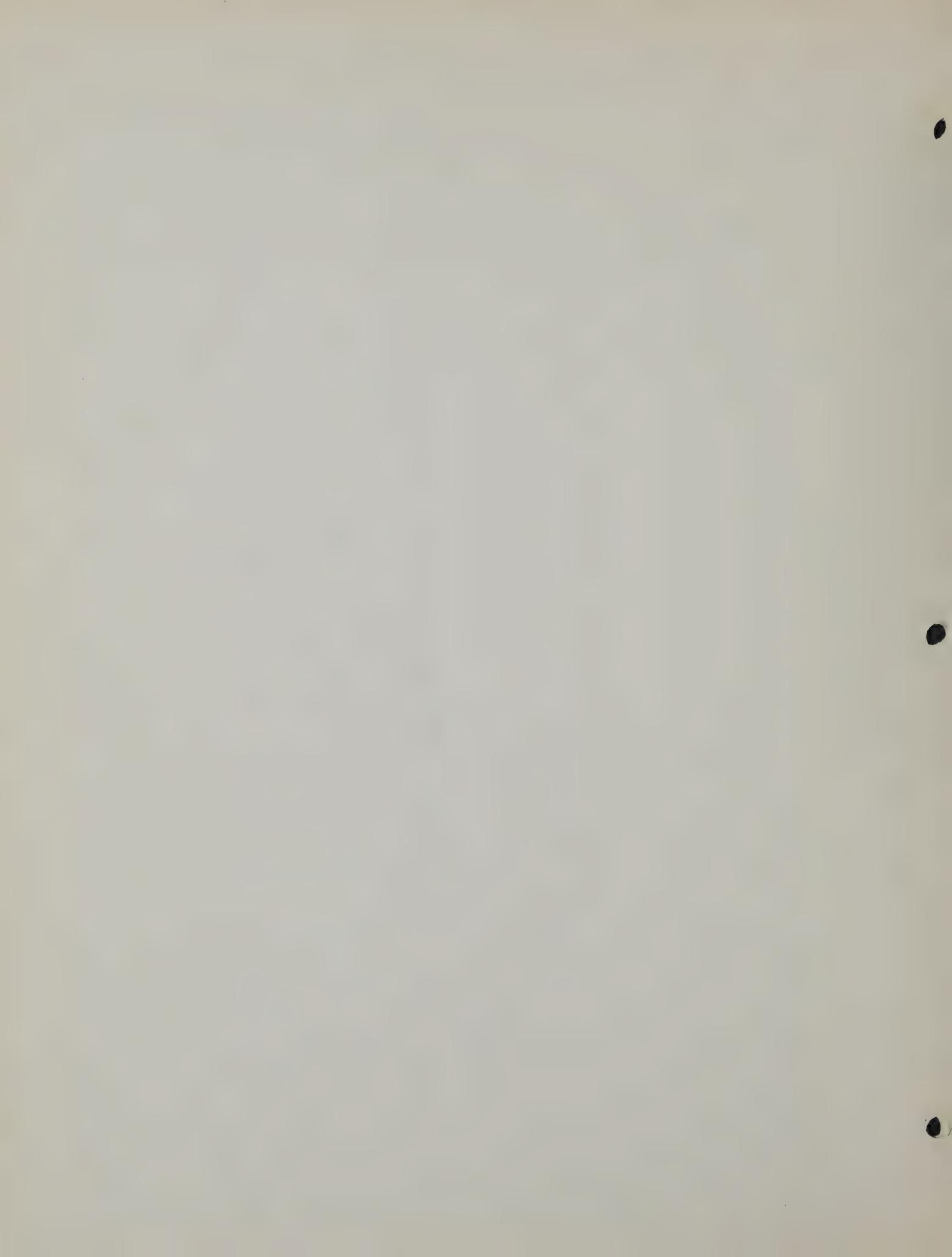


because it enables him to feel at home in the world.

With the conquest and merging of tribes, clans and nations, religion ceases to be normal and only becomes such again when the original folk divisions are obliterated. With the increase of knowledge and the mental development of only part of the population religion ceases to be normal and can become such only as tolerance becomes a principle of religion.

But tolerance seems to preclude folk religion. Yet folk religion is too important an element of civilization to be omitted. This dilemma can be resolved 1) if we will distinguish between folk religion and personal religion. The function of folk religion is to give cosmic significance to the experiences of the group and to events in the life of the individual which have vital significance for the group. 2) The folk to whose religion we subscribe should be the one whose cultural life we live. Since we believe in plural cultures we can subscribe to plural folk religions. This solution is the only one that will put an end to the ~~xxx~~ issue of state vs. church. An understanding of what is involved in that issue will hasten this solution. (Insert p. 109)

In the struggle of church and state we have the continuance of the struggle between Roman imperialism and occidental nationalism. The ultimate outcome of the struggle will undoubtedly be a victory for nationalism. Each nation will develop its own folk religion which will have to be continually corrected by personal religion. The Jewish people ought to pioneer in solving the problem of the relation of religion to the rest of civilization. There is certainly no more knotty problem nor one that is more in need of solution. Its knotty character is due to the presence of age old habits and passionate prejudices which make an objective consideration of religion almost impossible. The most awesome apprehensions stand in the way of the call to revise religious beliefs. On the other hand, the repudiation of traditional ideas about religion is identified as the repudiation of religion altogether. Religion



which should function as the conserving force in human life conserving the worthwhile values only, and which should therefore continually be progressing in its methods of conservation has become a force for conservation. Religion is therefore regarded as a sort of anti-evolutionary factor to which it is paradoxical to apply the category of evolution. All this is of course not only wrong, but tragically misleading. It should be the task of the Jewish people to drag mankind as well as itself out of the swamp of errors in which the human race has lost its way.

That is all very pretty, but what should actually be the solution: After all the years that I have been pondering this problem I am as much in the dark as ever. Perhaps I shall see the light if I will exploit to the utmost the distinction between folk and personal religion.

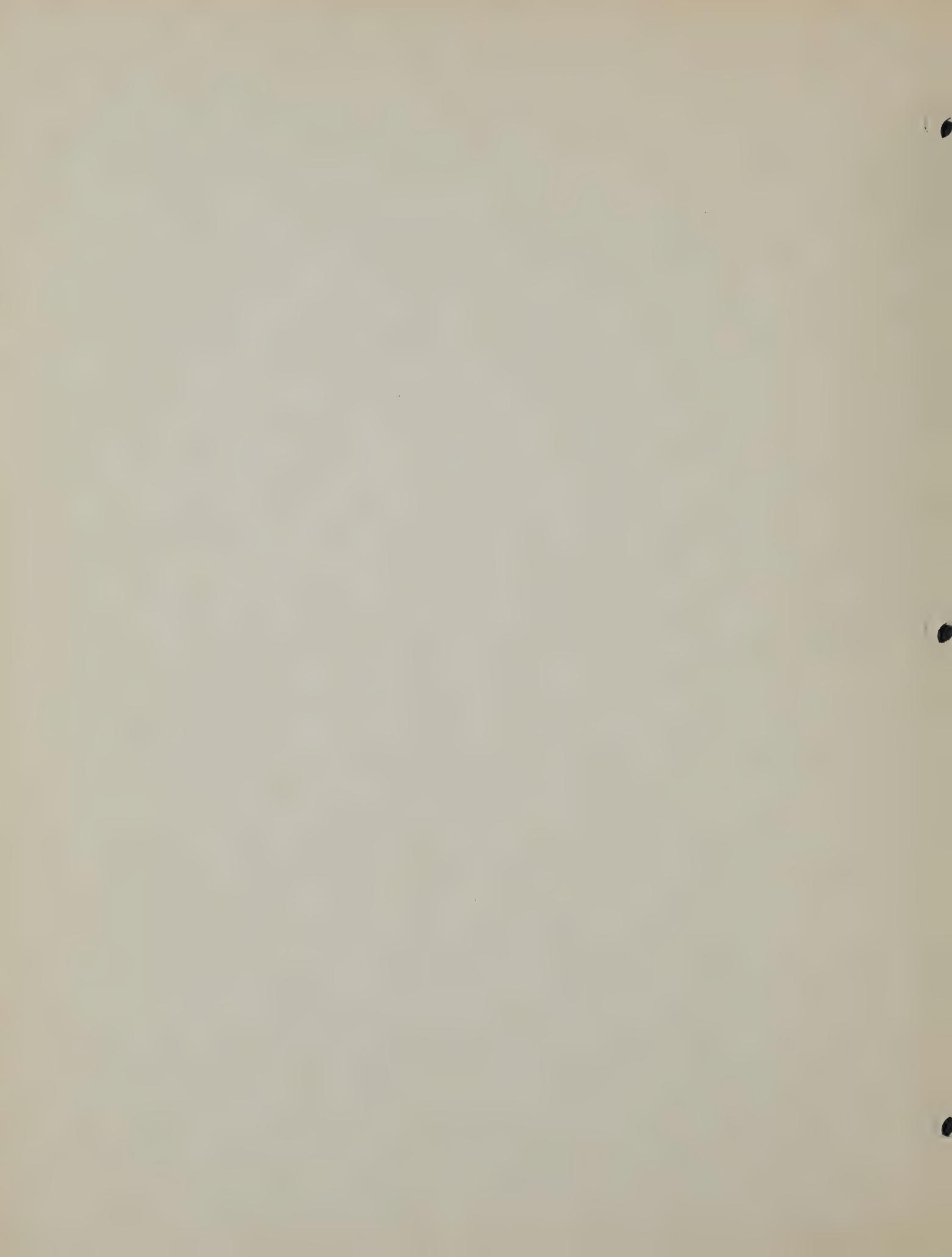
Let me restate some of the facts and questions which have to be taken into account.

1. Insofar as human life has to reckon with the relationship of the individual to totality there is bound to be religion.

2. From the psychology of religious experience we learn that collective life as such takes on the character of religion, i.e. that collective life stimulates in the individual a sense of totality.

3. One question is "How the religious aspect of collective life can 1) remain free of all taint of intolerance and 2) be shared by people who have divergent views of the nature of totality?"

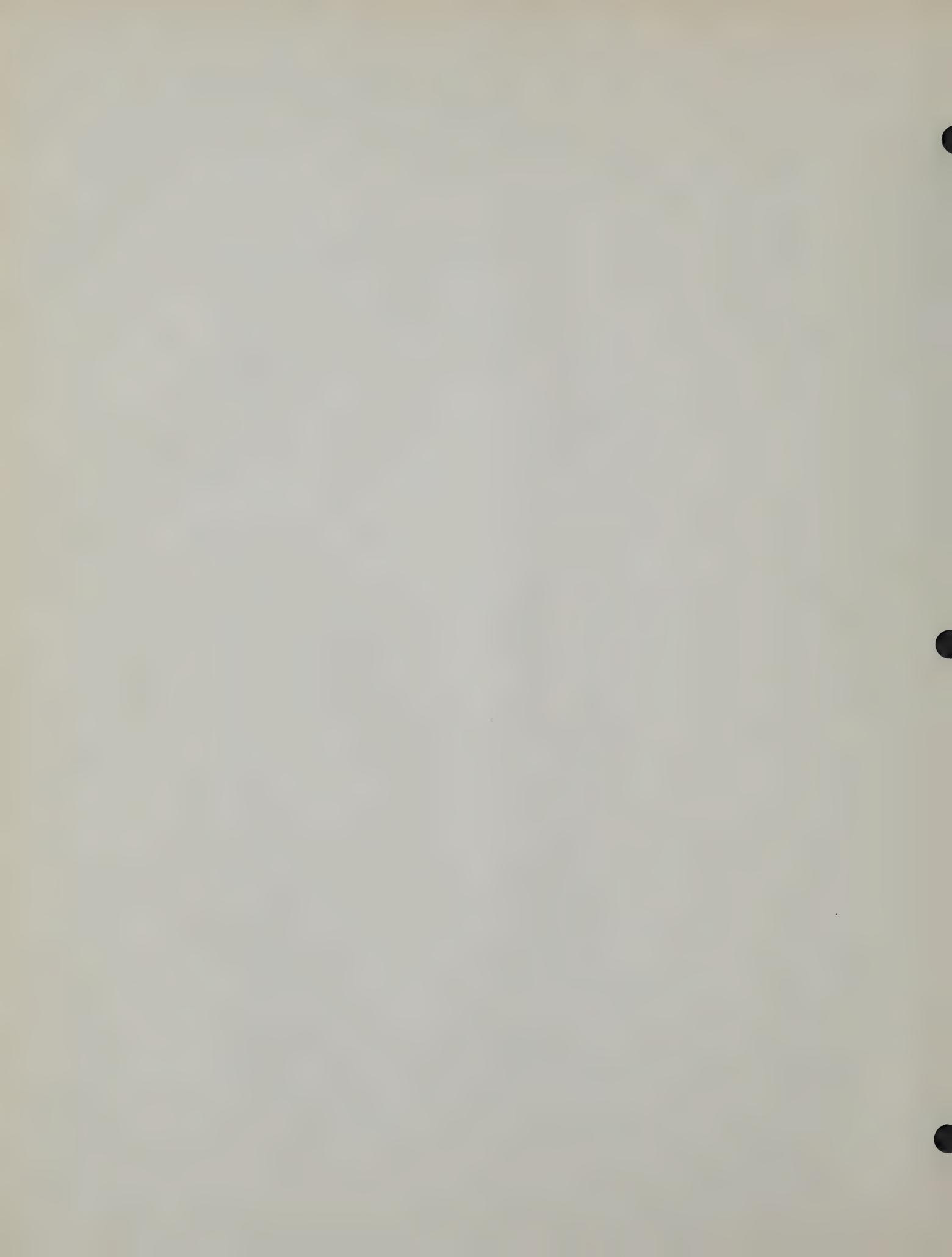
4. The other question is "What active interest, if any, should a cultural group take in the fostering of personal religion, since that is admittedly the more important type of religion? If personal religion is to be a corrective of folk religion, any meddling on the part of the group is bound to vitiate this function of personal religion.



Friday, October 4, 1929

Yesterday morning I officiated at a wedding ceremony in the library of the SAJ. As a rule I am reluctant to officiate at weddings, especially of people whom I have never known. In this instance, however, the mother of the bride who is a sister of an insurance agent in Cleveland by the name of Engelman, was very anxious that I should officiate. That is why I consented. It is probably the inner resistance to performing ceremonies that accounts for the difficulty I experience each time I anticipate having to deliver the talk under the canopy. Unless I carefully prepare the phrasing of each sentence before I go to officiate I begin to ramble, and this despite (or perhaps because of) the fact that I say the same thing practically each time. Having gone late to bed the night before I had managed to learn only half of what I had to say. That part went off well. Through the rest I fumbled as best I could. I don't suppose the people noticed my difficulty. In fact I am sure they didn't but I was demoralized for the rest of the day.

The worst part of the depressed state of mind I get into is that my better reason tells me that it is silly of me to give even a second thought to such an experience. Of course, the unreliability of my memory frightens me, and reminds me of the main source of my failure to consummate a single piece of sustained writing. But here I have been working on a sermon in which I urge that we should learn to appreciate the worthwhileness of life by practicing the art of accentuating and remembering the advantages we enjoy and the abilities we possess together with all the permanent elements in the life of individuals and races. That is just the trouble that I preach only with my reason and not with my subconscious being. It is not a case of hence, the continual warfare that goes on within me. p. 179



- Two Confessions -

She was one of my parishioners. I hadn't seen her for a long time. By chance I learned that she had been ill and was now recuperating. I should have gone to see her but my failure to call on her when she was critically ill prevented me from coming to see her now. (Thus our mistakes beget inhibitions.)

After a few days she telephoned for an appointment. She no sooner sat down in my library chair that I could see by her worn and haggard face and the troubled look in her eyes that her soul was torn by some inner struggle in which the contending passions were taking heavy toll in health and peace of mind. She came to the point at once and unfolded the following tale:

"I was born in a small town in Russia. My parents were very poor but highly educated. My father was never able to make ends meet. When I was seventeen the entire family migrated to America.

"I was good looking as a girl and full of life. I had no difficulty in making friends. Although there were plenty of young men that wanted to marry me, I didn't take to any of them. When I was nineteen there used to visit us a young man who was studying law. He was a quiet and unassuming sort of chap. My father liked him exceedingly because he knew Hebrew very well, and was well read in the Jewish literature generally. I also took a liking to him, and after a while I thought I was in love with him. Yet I could not make up my mind about him. Whenever I did not see him for a long while I used to miss him very much and used to pray that he should come. But when he did come my interest in him flagged. For four years I debated with myself whether I should marry him, and finally I became his wife.

Not long after the wedding I realized I made the mistake of my life for I had never loved my husband and I do not love him now. When a child came I decided to live for my child. In a few years another child



came, and all my years I gave to my children.

"I had more than one opportunity to enjoy life without danger of being discovered by my husband, yet I withstood the temptation for fear that my children's reputation might suffer thereby. I met a good many men to whom I was drawn but I suppressed my innermost yearnings, and so I have withered away without love or joy.

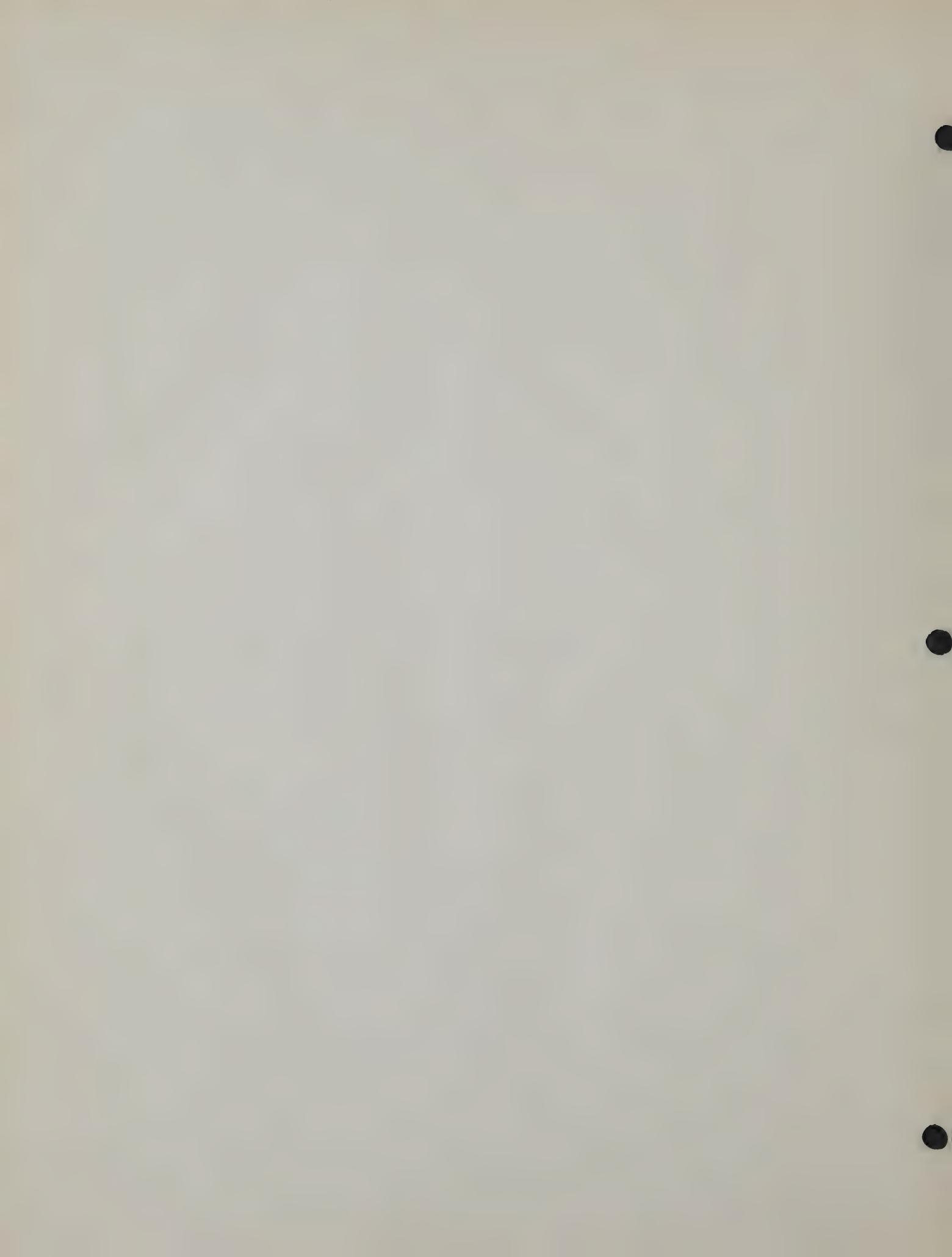
"My heart still longs for love. I am forty-two now and before I took sick men still found me attractive. Every one would praise my good looks and my husband was proud of me. He is not aware that I don't love him. He is no fool, yet in his relationship to me he is blind and refuses to see. In our intimate moments he gives me a sense of repulsion. He calls me 'a cold proposition' but I wouldn't dare tell him why I don't respond.

"Recently I formed the acquaintance of a man whom I felt I could love. But realizing what our friendship could lead to I told him that I have grown up children, and in order not to bring any disgrace on them we must not meet again. This separation brought on my illness, and here I am as you see me the victim of self-sacrifice for my children.

"From my own experience I can testify that a woman who lives with a man whom she does not love is not much better than a prostitute."

What could I say to her but try to comfort her with the aid of those moral generalizations by which society has armed itself against the reckless self-fulfillment of the biological urges? I recalled some of Felix Adler's beautiful but cruel advice to those who are bound down by loveless marriage and after taking off its edge, offered it to this wretched woman.

As soon as she left I called up my friend X. He is a few years older than I am worn with the battle of life yet with a soul that is as serene as a pellucid lake. I go to him as to a father confessor. I had



in mind for the longest time to arrange for a chat, but I was so pre-occupied that I kept on postponing the pleasure which I derived from my talks with him. When, however, the woman parishoner left me, I could restrain myself no longer and told him that I wanted to see him at once. Busy as he is he always manages to find time for me. As soon as I came to his study and sat down in the comfortable chair he offered me I unburdened myself ~~in~~ ^{of} the following tale:

"I was born in a small town in Russia. My father was a very learned Talmudist but was unable to make a living. When I was a young boy the family migrated to America.

"I was intellectually alert as a student and might have gone into the study of law or medicine or worked my way up in business but my parents' hearts, especially mother's, was set upon my being a rabbi because in that calling I would be leading a Jewish life, and furthering the spiritual welfare of my people.

"I attended the Seminary for a number of years. During the last three years when my "Sturm and Drang Periode" was on I couldn't make up my mind whether to go into the rabbinate or not. In my second year at the post-graduate course in Columbia I had a chance to accept an Ethical Culture Fellowship in Harvard and commit myself to Ethical Culturism. But when I saw that my classmate Kauvar was accepting the position in Denver, I was afraid that I would be losing a desirable opportunity in giving up the ministry.

"A short time afterwards I accepted the pulpit of the 85 St. Congregation. I had my unpleasantness with the ? Rav and his followers. I was about to take up the study of law, when again the thought of what a great opportunity I would be surrendering, if I gave up the ministry, wedded me to it completely.

"In time I became a member of the Seminary Faculty where my commitment to the rabbinate became even more confirmed. Then came the



plan of writing a new interpretation of the Torah, of revising and revaluating the conceptions of Jewish theology, etc.~~in~~ a kind of intellectual children. Much unpleasantness as I encountered in the Seminary, I continued with my rabbinic work for the sake of the children, incurred further ministerial duties such as preaching and wasting time with people who never learn or grow up for the sake of my mental children. But in all that time I have missed the joy of honest creative effort which is possible only when one is free from the senseless taboos that shackle the mind and stifle the soul.

But of course I couldn't tell that to the members of the Seminary faculty or the SAJ Board of Trustees. They wouldn't understand. They are blind and will not see. They say I am cold and unsentimental. I wouldn't dare tell them why.

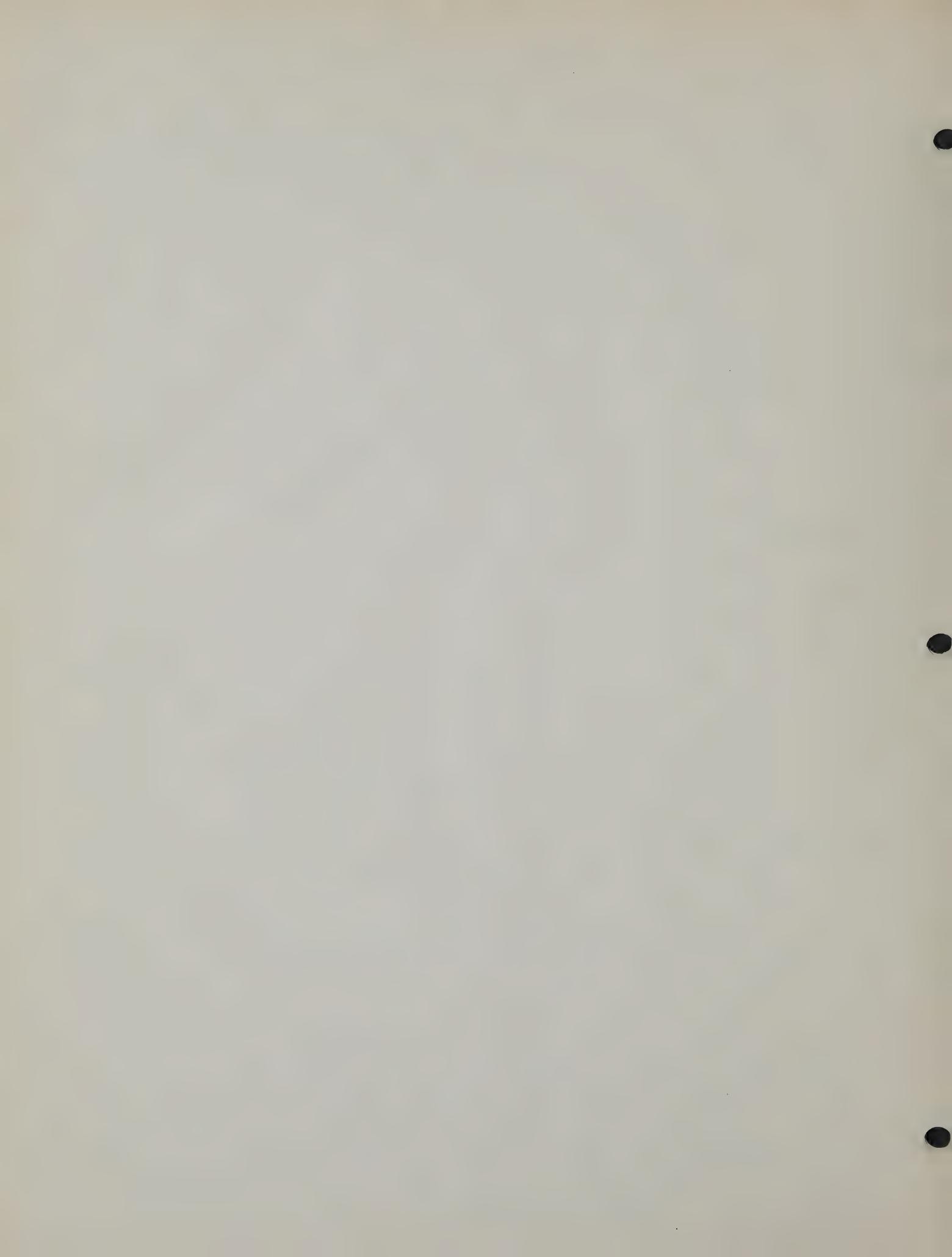
Recently I learned of an excellent opportunity that presented itself in the field of insurance. I am a great believer in insurance from a practical and spiritual point of view. I regard it as the one invention in which man has put into practical effect the urge to cooperation and to security. My heart is very much drawn to that kind of work. But how can I engage in it without aspersing the children I've brought up - I mean, of course, the ideas and plans about Judaism? I become very much depressed at times. You see me now, an unhappy man, the victim of devotion to the children of my brain."

I looked at my watch. I had only one hour to get ready for the religious service which was to usher in the New Year. So without waiting for a reply I rushed off.

* * *

Sunday night, October 6, 1929

At the Rosh Hashanah services yesterday and today we had a "packed house." Fortunately I am spared the knowledge of many an altercation that no doubt takes place between the Seat Committee and those



who want to buy seats for the holidays, the former trying to extort as much as they can, the latter trying to come off as cheaply as they can. On the other hand, I haven't the means of ascertaining whether the services which I try to make as intelligible and as interesting as possible under the circumstances, or the sermons which I preach, make the least dent upon the minds of the participants. I know that even in my own household at table the children discuss the people whom they saw at services, the dress, the headgear, the jewelry of those people, criticizing, ridiculing and tearing to pieces those for whom they have no special liking; in other words, most of the people they know. To allude even to a serious or important idea suggested by the service would be just as much out of place as a funeral sermon at a banquet. And if this is the case in my house, I suppose it is the case in all the homes of the SAJ members. I was going to compare myself to one who addresses radio audiences, but then I recalled that in most instances those people receive letters of thanks and appreciation and no doubt also letters of criticism. I doubt whether those preachers who broadcast every Sunday would be able to keep up their efforts very long if they were to get as much response as I get from the SAJ.

What hurts most, of course, is that my own children seldom give any sign of being interested in what I teach. Perhaps they do listen perhaps occasionally an idea sinks into their minds, but I do not recall their ever passing any remark that would indicate that what I said from the pulpit was even heard by them. Once or twice Naomi alludes distantly to something I may have said in a sermon and Judith may ask a question or two about Judaism when I make it my business to draw her into a conversation, but Hadassah and Selma never afford me even that grudging pleasure.

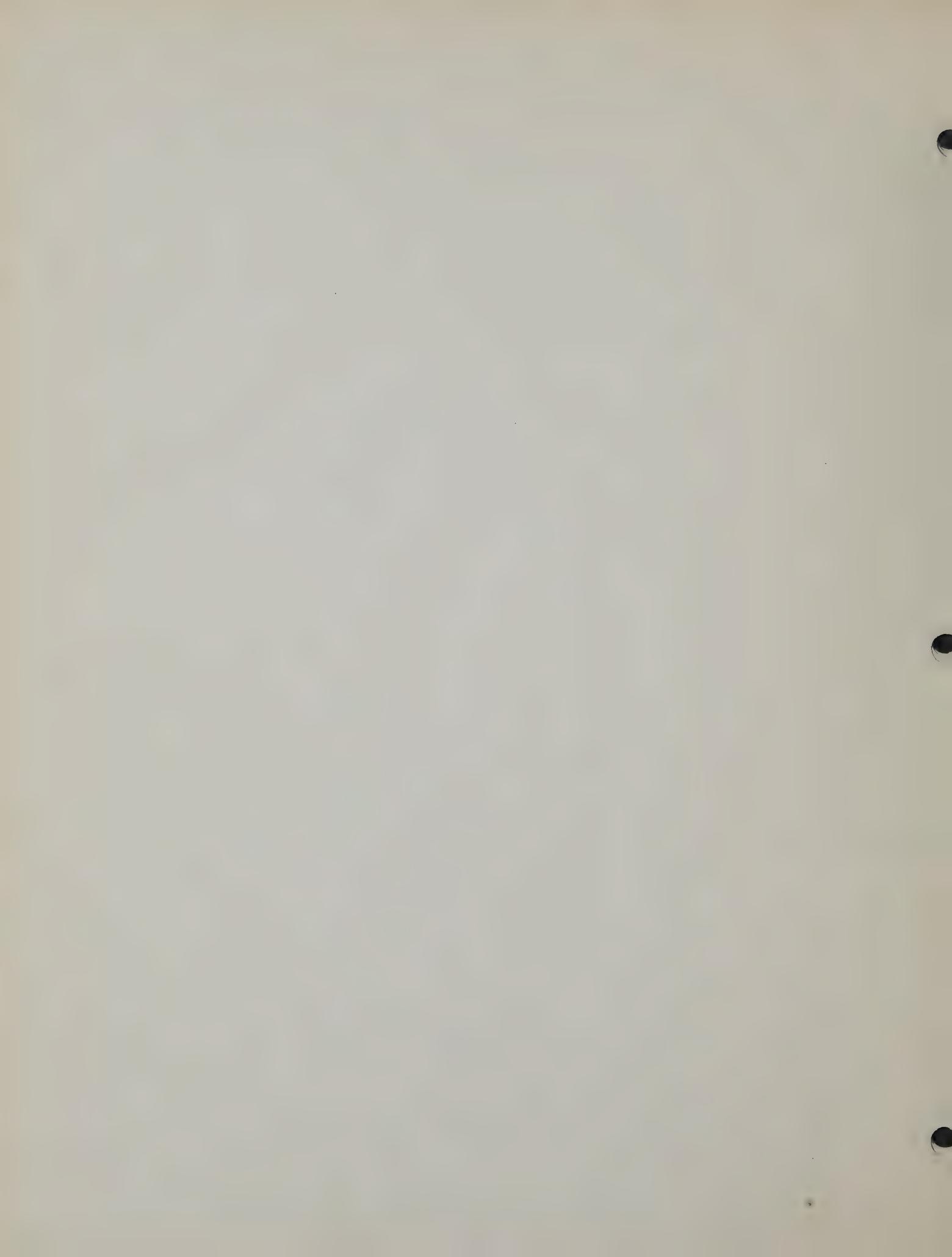


This complete want of a response makes it very difficult for me to preach. The planning of the sermons is a veritable torture. Formerly, every time I would go into the pulpit I would at least be sure that I had the main proposition and the sequence of ideas well in hand. That used to be the case when I preached at the Center. Since then it has been growing progressively harder for me to work out a sermon carefully. I am sure this growing difficulty is due to nothing else but to the studied coldness with which those in my lay entourage meet my overtures in behalf of Judaism. I am sure that if I had received the least bit of encouragement I could have done a good deal with the main ideas I tried to develop in my sermons of yesterday and today. But wanting that encouragement I had to galvanize myself into enthusiasm. Such forced effort has a devastating effect on my whole personality. The first reaction is a fit of despondency which it takes me at least a day or two to throw off.

The thought I tried to develop in my sermon yesterday was that in praying for the ability to count time we pray that we may lose sight of the fact of remembrance, and thus escape Kohelet's conclusion that all is vanity (a conclusion based upon the assumption that there is no remembrance). Rosh Hashonah as the day of remembrance is the day for realizing that there are values which survive the passing of time, etc.

Today I tried to interpret the faith of Abraham as a singular ambition to found a people that would live in accordance with the law of God. That ambition he refused to give up despite the most heart-breaking discouragement. I then pointed out that to be a Jew was to cherish the same ambition. The moment therefore we surrender that ambition we cease to be Jews.

I concluded with the ~~most~~ memorable words of Lord Melchett "There is no power etc." When I was through the wife of Harry Liebovitz (a hysterical untutored self-centered and feather brained creature) said



"I liked the concluding sentence of your sermon. Coming from a gentile it is wonderful." She was very much disappointed when I told her that Lord Melchett was a Jew, and a rich Jew at that. She had never heard of Lord Melchett.

This evening Phineas showed me a statement which appeared ~~in~~ today in the N.Y. American about the Rosewald prize for the best essay on Judaism in America. That means that if I want to stand a chance of trying for the prize I must be up and doing and no longer postpone the formulation of my program based on Judaism as a civilization.

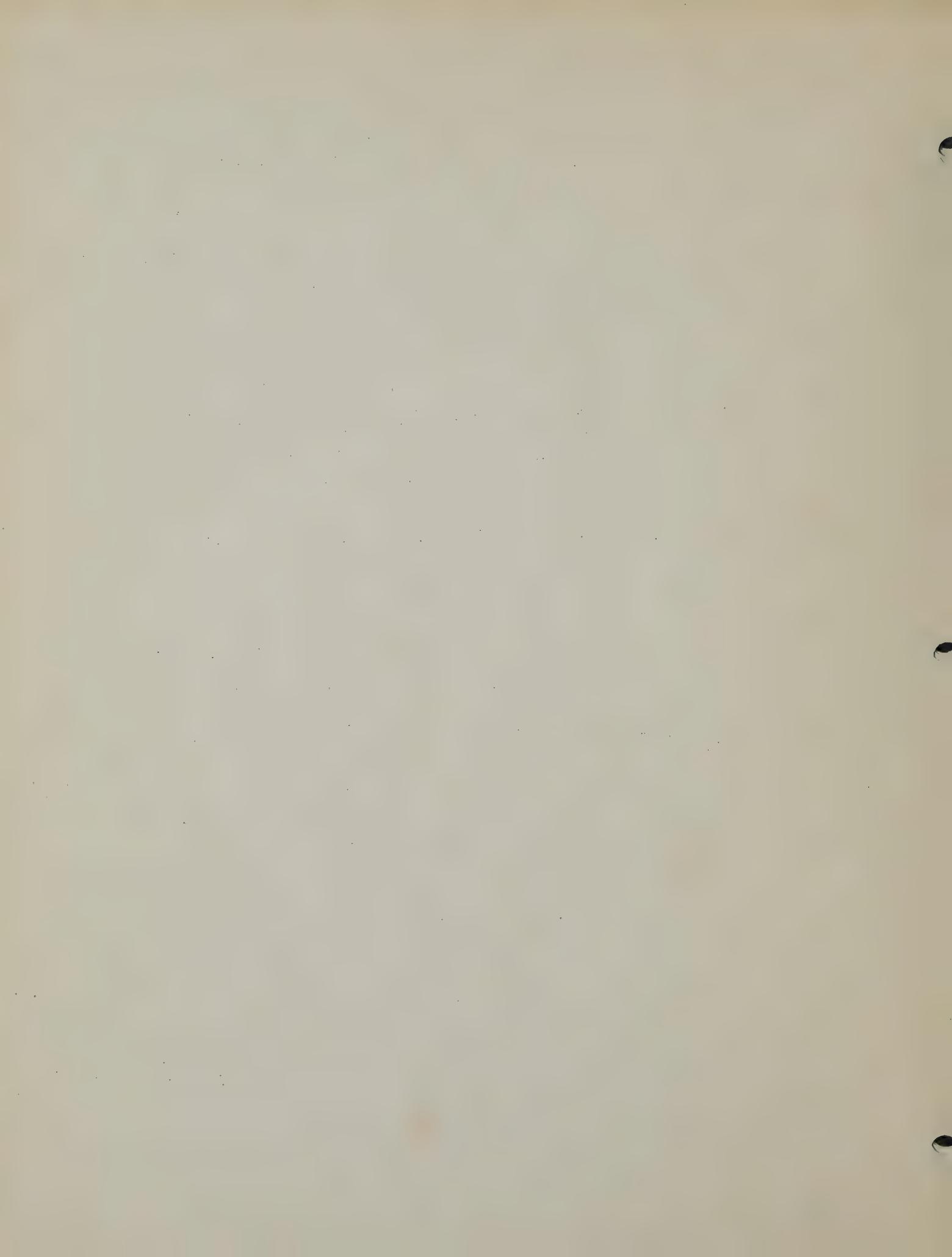
So far the outlines I have sketched of the discussion of the place of religion in Judaism as a civilization have proved unsatisfactory. Perhaps I shall have better luck next time.

A modern civilization differs from ancient civilizations in being based on tolerance. If Judaism is to be a modern civilization we must conceive it as capable of harboring all kinds of religion and no-religion. There must be room in it for Orthodoxy, Modernist religion mystic religion. The only kind of religion which a modern civilization cannot tolerate is one which would urge the destruction or suppression of that civilization. Hence it is not conceivable how a Jew can accept Christianity or Mohammedism and still be a Jew.

But what the Jew needs is not merely permission to accept any religion he chooses. In case he has found Orthodoxy untenable he should be helped by those who wish to further Jewish civilization to orient himself religiously. It is not therefore with the purpose of trying to formulate what shall be the future religion of the Jewish civilization but of helping those who want to be guided in the achievement of an understandable religion that we set forth the following ideas:

1. The need of acquiring a sense of evolution with regard to religion.

2. The realization that a) it is impossible to insist on one



uniform conception of God and b) it is possible for people who have different conceptions of God to worship in common.

3. The need for reinterpreting the religious values of ancient Judaism as a means of giving momentum to present day religious values.

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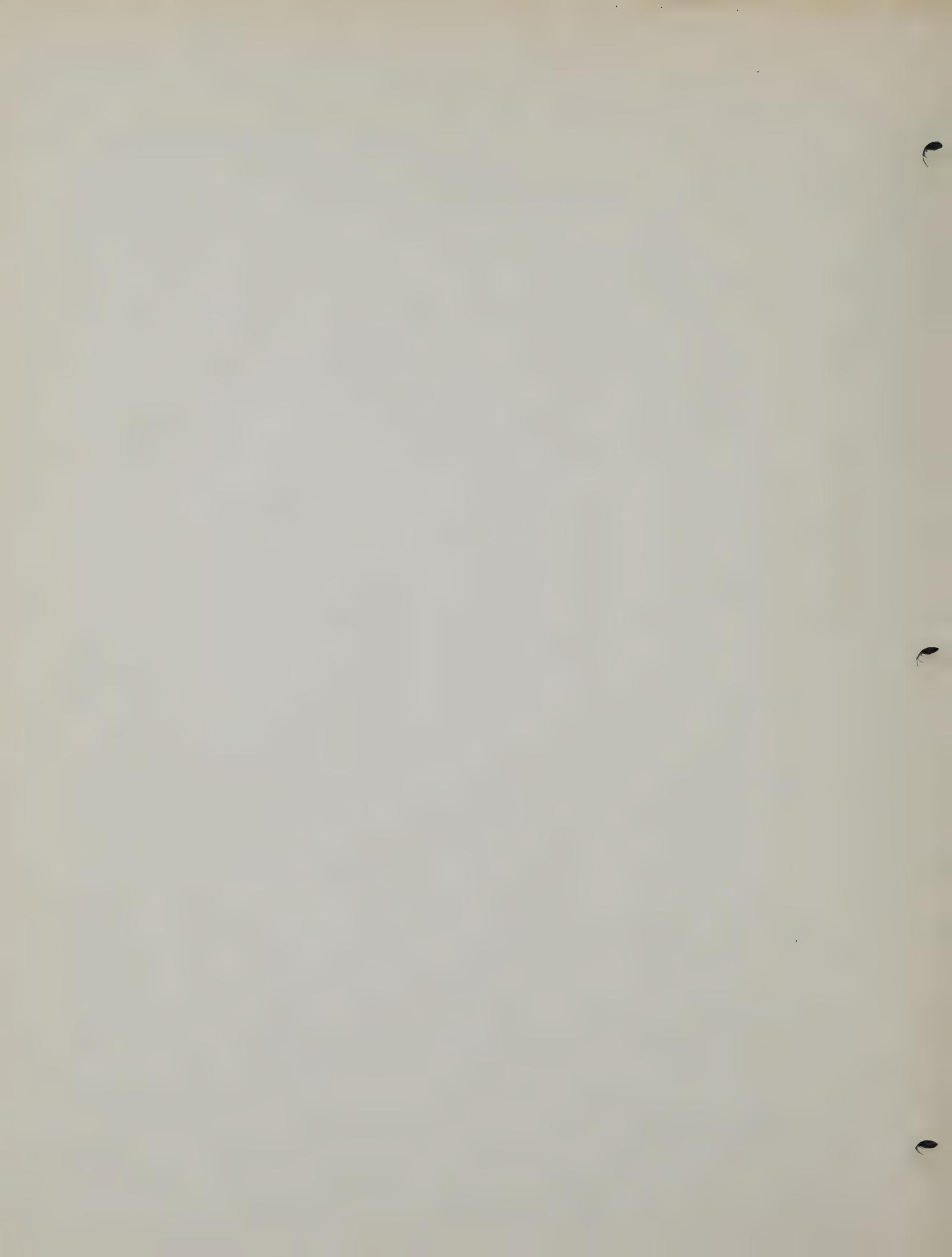
Monday, October 7, 1929

I do not care how many times I have to try to get this outline on religion. I shall work at it till I get it.

Judaism as a civilization implies sufficient content of a national, communal and cultural character to make it possible for Jews who have the most diverse views on religion to act as one people. In fact it is because they act as one people ~~in~~ despite, etc. that we have arrived at the conclusion that Judaism is a civilization. But we are in a dilemma. To omit religion entirely from the reckoning and to let every Jew to decide for himself what religion he is to live by is to leave the majority of Jews who find Orthodoxy untenable without any guidance whatever in the one element upon which depends the continuity of Jewish life or Judaism. On the other hand, to reckon with it we must discover a formula which would ~~synthesizewould~~ synthesize an affirmative attitude ~~toward~~ with freedom of conscience. Difficult and complicated as the problem may be we must make an attempt to solve it.

The solution requires that we reopen the question "What is the relation of religion to a civilization?" Whatever in a civilization answers to the value "#sacred" is part of the religion of that civilization. A civilization in which nothing is sacred is as inconceivable as one in which nothing is deemed beautiful. A requisite to anything assuming the value "sacred" is that it be deemed an object of value to one's culture folk.

So long as the individual is merged in the group he finds it easy to accept the sancta of his folk. With the emergence of the in-



dividual (which fact means that the individual enters into relationships that transcend the limits of his folk) there arises the conflict between sancta. If freedom of conscience means anything it must mean the right to cherish sancta that transcend the limits of one's folk.

Judith is encountering challenge in her work at the school of the Jewish Center of Brooklyn, challenge on the part of the fourth and fifth grade pupils who resist her efforts to teach them Hebrew songs. This challenge is apparently doing more to intensify her Jewishness than any Jewish inspiration or instruction that either I or the Teachers Institute might afford her. This challenge brought her closer spiritually to me. She seemed to snuggle to Lena and me this evening when she asked to take a ~~walk~~ walk with us. While walking I unburdened myself of the grievance that I had against the children for the kind of conversation in which they indulged at table both days of Rosh Hashanah. I certainly feel in better spirits now.

* * *

Tuesday, October 8, 1929

One of the Hebrew Teachers in the Brooklyn Jewish Center School is a Palestinian. Judith asked him to teach the children the benediction for the Lulab. He said he did not know it and asked her to write it for him. The same was the case when she asked him to teach the children P. 16^v.

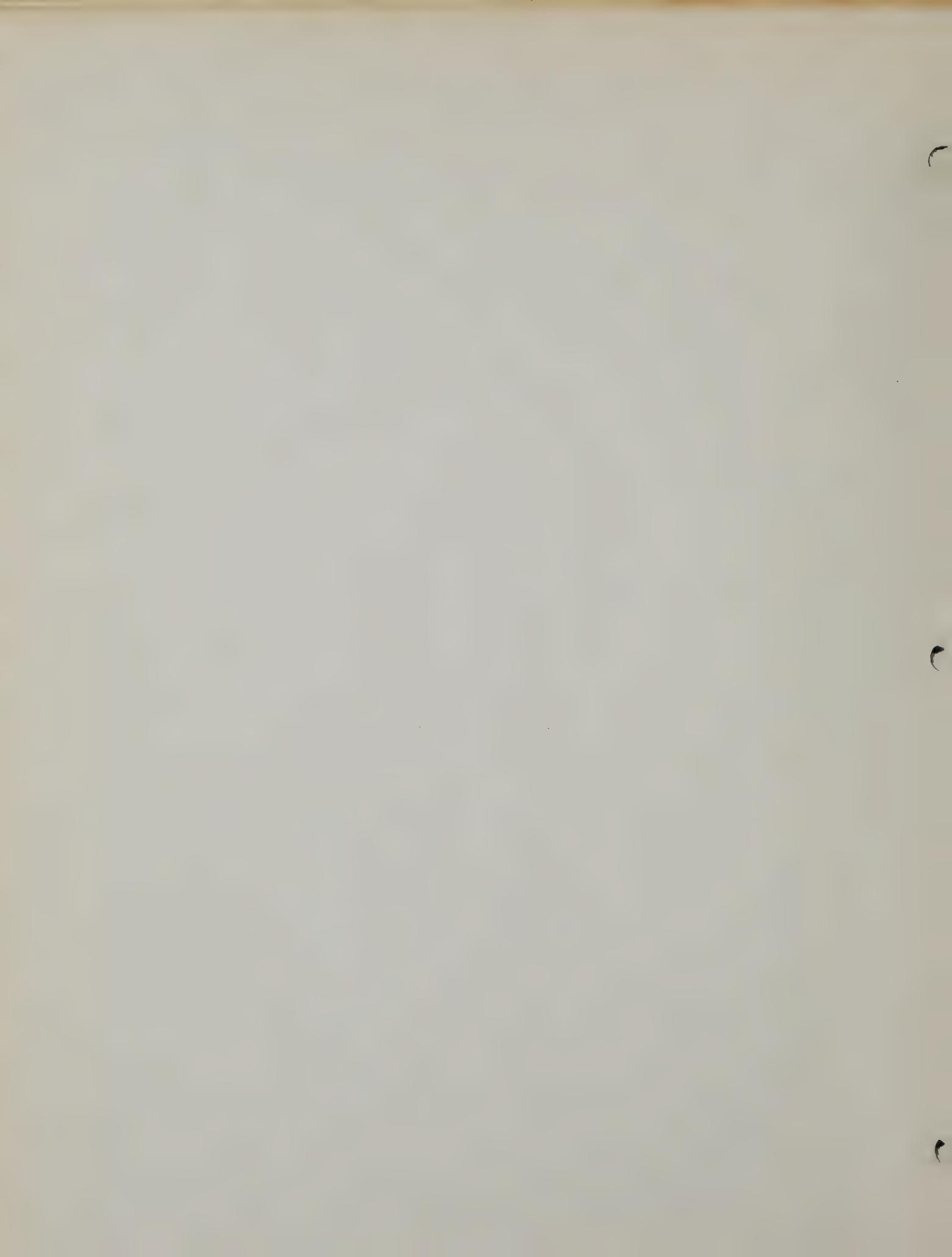
The committee consisting of Benderly and Brogin representing the Hebrew High School and of myself, Levine and Dinin representing the TI met today at 2:30 at the SAJ house. I exerted all my efforts to maintain the peace between Benderly and Levine. It was like taking care that the benzine shouldn't come too near the fire. So far I accomplished my purpose to have Benderly promise that he will see to it that



during the last two years all students eligible from the standpoint of personality and ability for the TI be given the course that would qualify them for admission. He promised us of the TI access to the classes so that we might keep ourselves informed of those upon whom we might count to enter the Institute.

At first B would admit that the moral obligation to prepare the students for the TI in accordance with the requirements of the TI extended only to those who intended to enter the training course. As for those who wished to enter the Academic department we had no right to expect the High school classes to meet our requirements. That would be meddling with the Hebrew High School. If the Bureau found fit to require of those who did not intend to enter the training courses of the TI only 1000 credits in place of the 1400 required of those who did, it was entirely within its rights to do so. In discussing this point he began using his brutal and offensive manner but fortunately he subsided shortly and the conference ended peacefully. After a while he seemed willing to concede even the point of having those who want to take the academic course come up to the TI requirements.

I forgot to record that Chipkin called last night. He returned the day before R.H. from his trip abroad where he was away for 15 months. He spent 5en weeks in Russia where he made a study of conditions, especially in the Jewish colonies. He stayed a few months in Palestine. Although he said he regretted to have to leave Palestine (that was long before the riots) he was infinitely more enthusiastic from the standpoint of achievement about the Jewish Russian settlements. What appealed to him in the latter was the fully conscious and clearly conceived purpose which is pursued with a directness and singlemindedness of which there is not the slightest intimation in the Palestine settlement. The difference between the two settlements is conspicuous in the matter of



education. In Russia they have succeeded as nowhere else in the world to integrate the school with Society; in Palestine the educational system is in a state of chaos. Of the Mizrahi political machine he could not but speak with disgust and contempt.

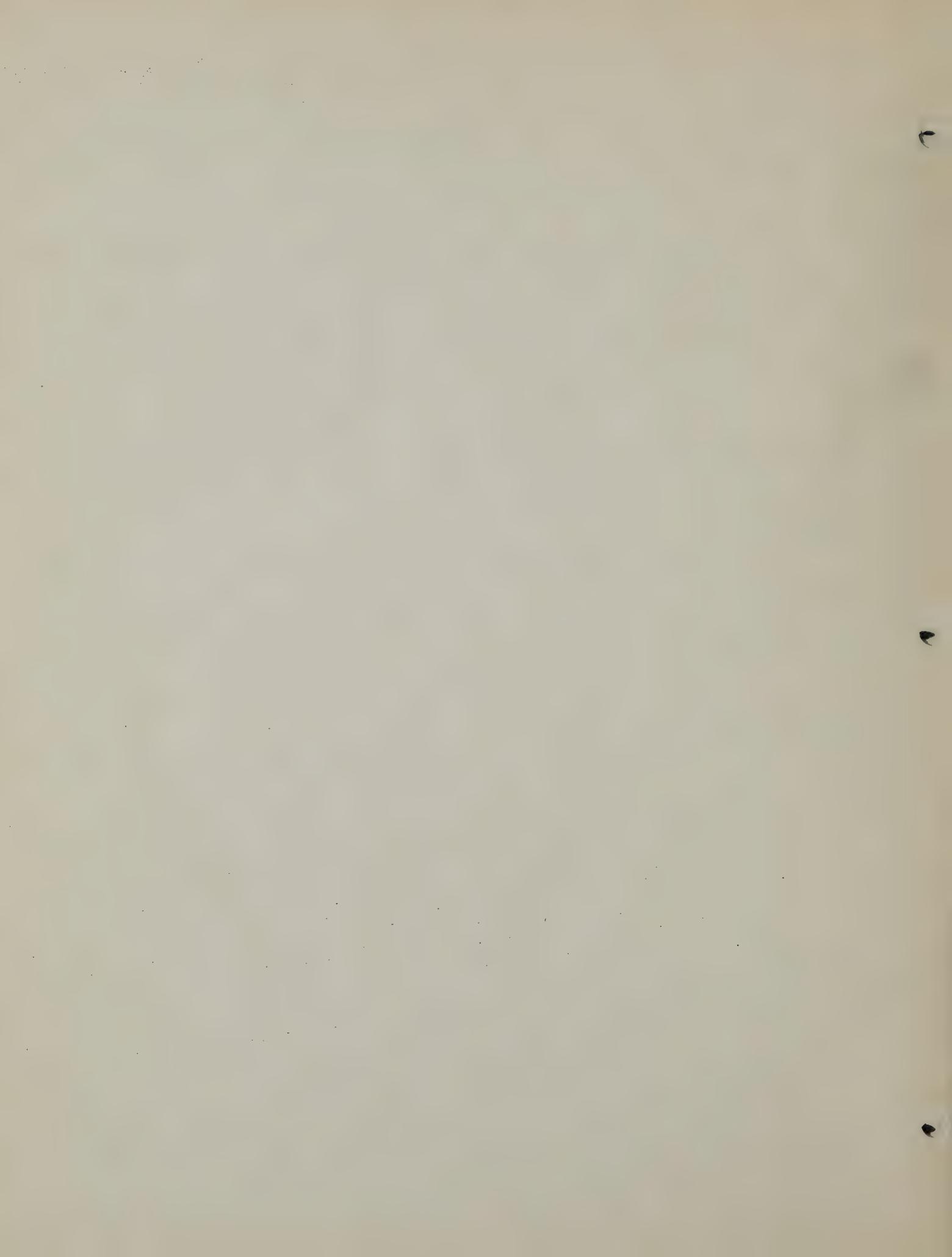
Today I read myself full of literature about religion. I re-read the greater part of Whitehead's little book Religion in the Making and I skimmed H. E. Barnes' new book The Twilight of Christianity. The former is concentrated thought, the latter is a rehash of anti-religious demagogery served in a lot of water. No one is more happy than I am to see Barnes lambasting Orthodoxy, but when he includes men like Whitehead, Wieman and Ames in his attack he only delays the advent of spiritual emancipation.

The absurd lengths to which he sometimes goes in his argument are exhibited in his suggesting the elimination of the terms "sacred" and "spiritual."

* * *

Wednesday, October 9, 1929

I have just come from a members' meeting of the SAJ. Much as I had wanted to avoid the discussion of the Kol Nidrei question I could not refrain from bringing it up because I began to feel very uncomfortable under the pressure that Rosenblatt and Klein (who is chairman) were beginning to bring to bear upon me that I should cater to the Orthodox element in our membership body. They wheedled out of me the consent to permit the cantor to recite the K.N. on condition that I would announce beforehand that this was done out of regard for those who insist upon saying the K.N. If I had done that the word would have gone out that I retreated from the position I had all along taken. After heated discussion it was decided to abide by the status quo and not have the cantor recite the K.N.



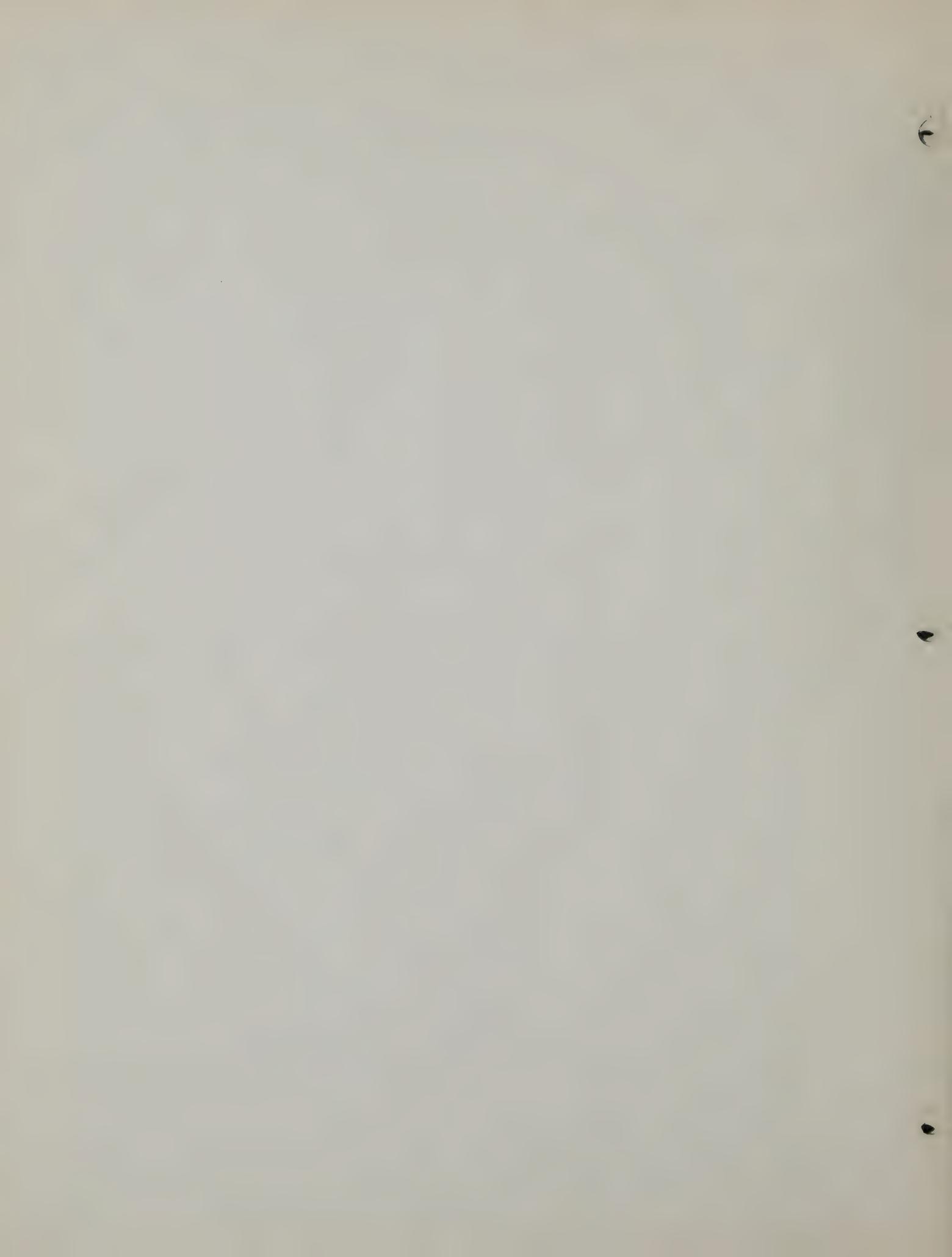
I hope that the experience I went through again with the K.N. this year will teach me to be firm in my dealings with the members and trustees of the SAJ and simply insist that I must have my way or get out!

* * *

Thursday, October 10, 1929

Although I was aware before I went to the meeting last night that I would be called upon to say something there was nothing I could think of as a topic of interest. The halycon days when I dreamed of establishing a group that would be dominated by the conscious purpose of enriching the Jewish aspects of their lives are long past. Bitter disillusionment is the only term that describes my reaction to the SAJ. Every time I enter the building I feel as though I moved among the ruins of a sanctuary which I had toiled to rear. But hope will not die down in the human heart. When I descry the slightest evidence of yearning for the truth or holiness my old illusions come to life.

This is what happened last night. ~~Klein~~ Klein called upon Rosenblatt to speak. R. played - and for an untutored layman quite skillfully - upon his one string, the synagogue as the fountainhead of Jewish interest and activity, and appealed to those present to strengthen the SAJ synagogue or congregation. After he was through K. called for discussion, but not a soul responded. Seeing that the meeting might end in a flop Rosenblatt spring his idea fixe of strengthening the congregation by holding a \$100 dinner. He was aware that it would call forth opposition. H. Liebovitz voiced the opposition and there the second firecracker burned out. Again it looked as though the meeting would die a natural death. Up there spoke Starr, the only other member besides Sol Lampert who understands Hebrew, and something of a "nudnick" and said that we ought to utilize the members' meeting to become acquainted with the aims of the SAJ, especially as the members seem to have forgotten all about them. I caught upon these remarks as a drowning man catches



upon a straw and I tried to explain to those present that I agreed with R that the synagogue ought to be the fountainhead of Jewish inspiration but that in actuality the synagogue is moribund. The movements that make for constructive Jewish effort have not emanated from the synagogue. There is need for vitalizing the synagogue. The only way to vitalize it is to have it function in a spirit of intellectual honesty and consistency. This led me to touch upon the question of Kol Nidre. After that the meeting was alive.

It may seem absurd to make so much ado about a matter that in itself is so trivial. Rosenblatt seemed convincing when he argued that it was like the fly which was the cause of the Israelites coming to Egypt. This time his attempt at cleverness miscarried because I turned the story against him. If it suited God to accomplish great purposes by means of a fly why should we condemn means apparently small in order to attain large ends. The K.N. question was in my opinion merely an entering wedge to larger and more important improvements in the service. Once a trifle becomes an issue it ceases to be a trifle. Jews are commanded to martyr themselves for the meanner of tying a shoelace, if a Gentile makes an issue of that.

I shall never forget the nightmare of the telephone bell that rang a Sunday night, Aug. 25 about 12 o'clock just as I entered the house after having arrived from West End. The voice at the other end was Rabbi Kouwais'. He was a classmate of mine at City College and the Seminary and has been rabbi at Denver ever since he was graduated. We have otherwise had very little in common. Even when we met at the convention of the Rabbinical Assembly last July we only exchanged greetings. To hear his voice at that time of the night was in itself gruesome. He asked whether anything was being done to stop the massacres in Palestine. His brother-in-law Dr. Bluestone who had charge of the

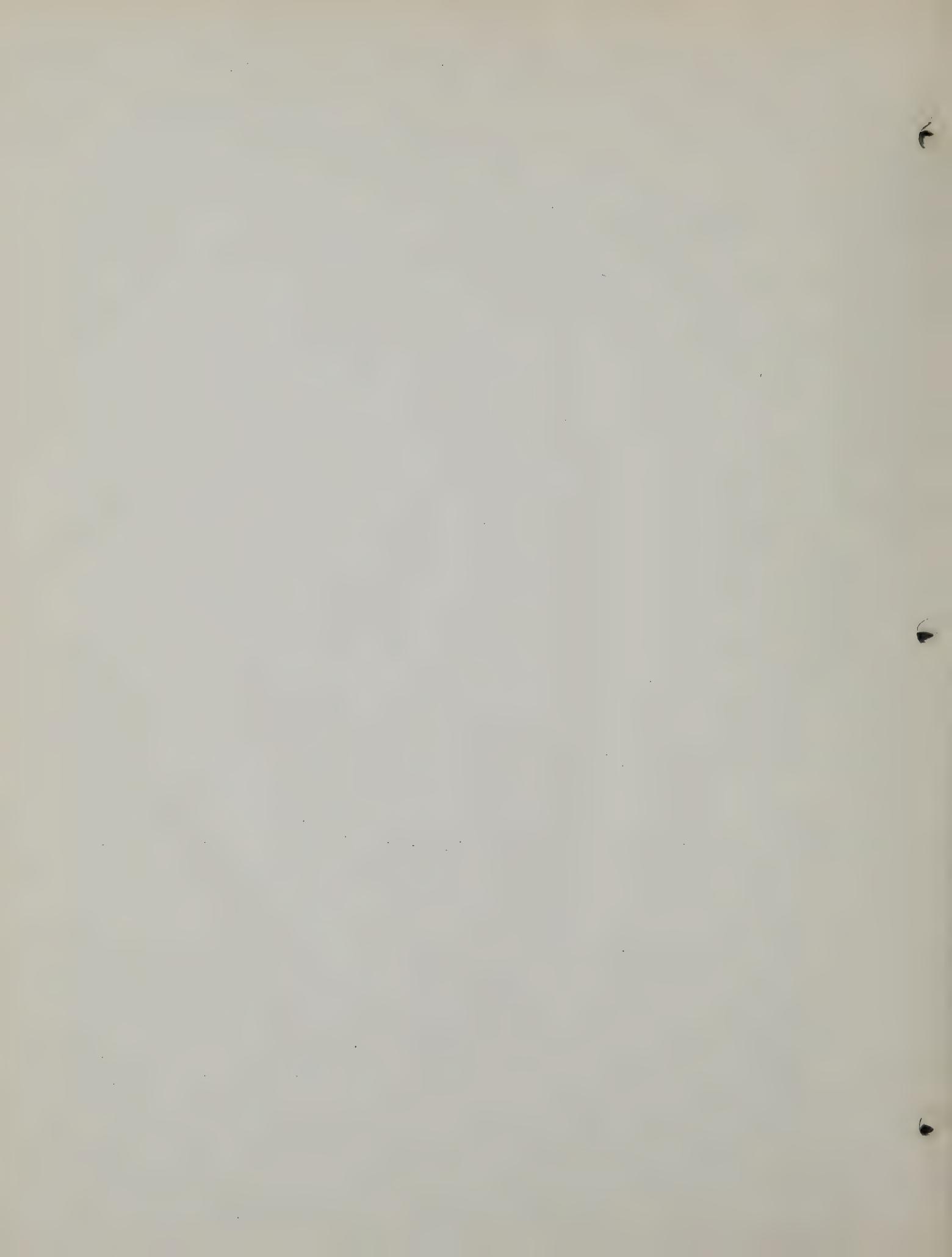


Hadassah work in Palestine had apprised him of the fact that the entire Jewish settlement might be wiped out, if nothing be done to stop the massacres at once. What could I do alone at that time of the night?

* * *

Saturday night, October 12, 1929

How pitiable my desperate efforts to surmount the difficulties I encounter in speaking and writing! About two weeks ago there came to me a certain Dr. Miller who intends to publish an art edition of Ruth, and asked me to write a brief introduction to the book. It is only a matter of 150 to 200 words. Yet this task has consumed so far at least five or six hours of concentrated reading and thinking and as yet I have not succeeded in getting up even a rough draft of what I want to say. Picture a man like MacDonald being asked to write the introduction. Even if he were waked from a deep sleep he would be able to dictate at once a statement of matchless beauty about the book of Ruth. Where - by the way - did he get that ease, that poise and that eloquence which mark every one of his extemporaneous addresses in today's Times? Is it heredity, hard work or genius? Can such ability be deliberately trained? It might perhaps in a youth. But here am I far advanced in middle age. Would that I possessed sufficient infantilism to find compensation for my frustrated ambition! Sometimes I imagine that if I had had the courage to give up my aspiration to scholarship and had mingled with people of all kinds I might have made good in some human activity. Living with books is at best only living at second-hand. They are excellent company and make one forget the world of realities, provided one is blessed with a powerful memory and can manage to become acquainted with a host of them, has been trained in the art of systematically interviewing them, culling their wisdom and keeps his mental and moral balance among them by surrounding himself with a retinue of his own creations. But a poor devil like myself is oppressed by the multiplicity of books and made aware of his own intellectual impotence.



What nonsense I see fit to pen! I sometimes feel as if I were going out of my mind. This is the case whenever I fall into this mood of chafing against the narrow and restricted sphere in which I am confined. What would I have done if fate had placed me in some little town like many of those where many men like myself have to breathe out their lives? Why haven't I learned to be satisfied with the blessings of home of wife and children, blessings far greater than I deserve considering how many better and abler than I are without? I wish to God I knew some way of overcoming this mental ailment. Is this a matter for religion or for the neurologist? Where does the power of the will come into this tangle of conflicting emotions and desires?

What a mockery that so helpless an individual like myself should be regarded as a teacher and guide in the art of living! On the other hand if I were to succeed in taking myself in hand and achieve peace of mind would I not be all the more fitted to help others who find themselves in the same quandry as I do? I have a cousin who is a physician. One of his lungs is entirely wasted away. He lives practically on one lung, having succeeded by sheer force of will to resist the progress of a bad case of tuberculosis. Now he is all the more qualified to treat cases of tuberculosis.

But I doubt whether by directing all my energies on an inward campaign I will ever attain peace of mind. I feel quite certain that nothing less than a radical change in outward circumstances will give me that happiness I yearn for. It is after all the futility of my labors in behalf of Judaism and religion that is probably the main source of my unhappiness. And it is the loneliness, the neglect in which I live, the fact that no one seeks me out, that at my age I still have to be hunting after people to be interested in what I might communicate, that proves to me the superfluity of my ideas and suggestions. There can be no more horrible thought than that of being superfluous. So far the Jewish



people has done little to prove that it isn't superfluous. Holding the position that I do in Jewish life I should have done something to justify the raison d'etre of the Jewish people.

At the services today there were about 135. I addressed a Bar Mitzvah and in place of a sermon I read the translation of ¹⁹ and commented upon it. The following is the substance of my remarks:

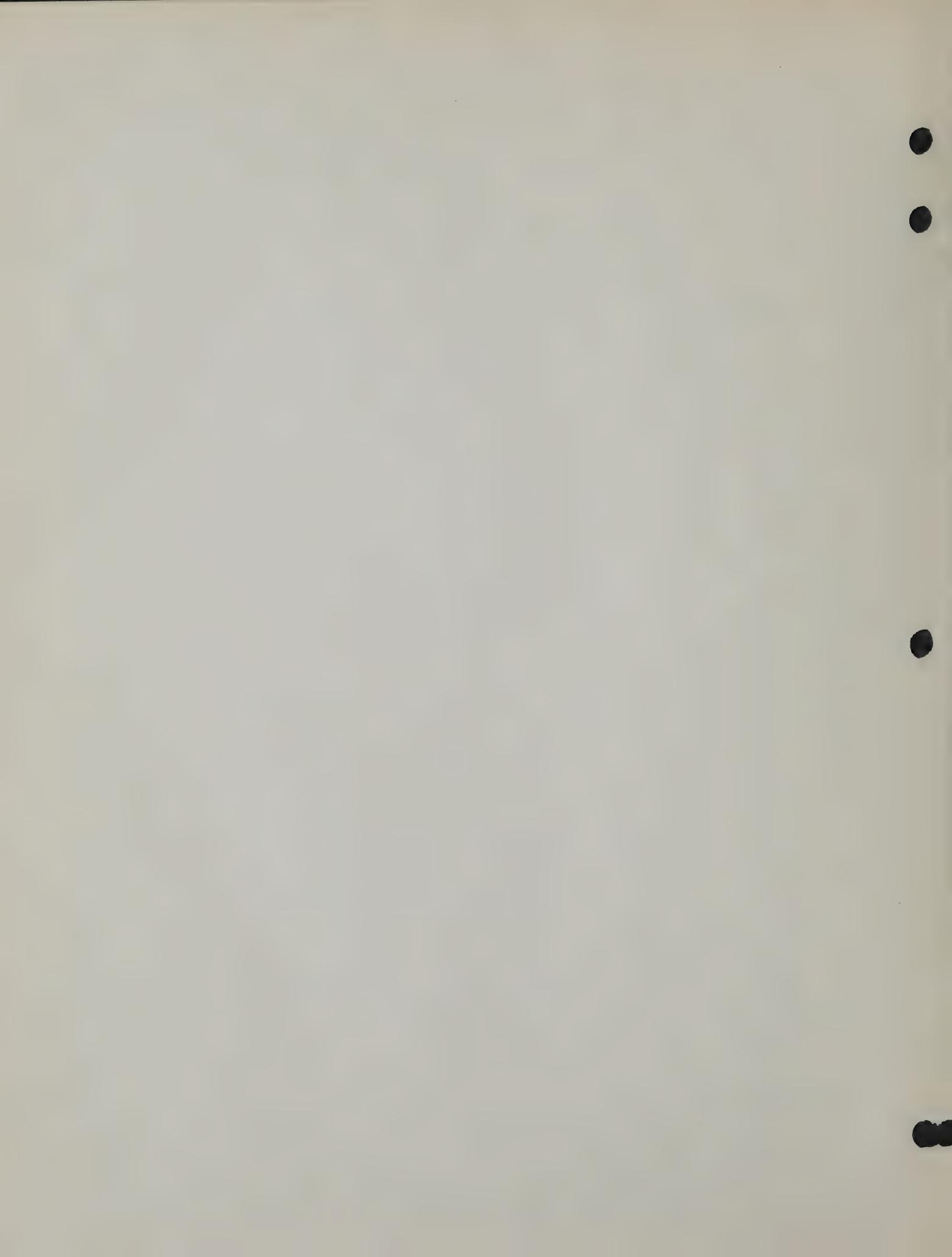
The thought of the poem is that if Israel does not perish it is because God cannot permit his reputation to suffer. The secret of Israel's immortality has therefore been commitment to belief in a God whose deposition was unthinkable. Such commitment did not exist in the case of the other nations. Nowadays with the majority of the Jews no longer feeling themselves committed to a conception of God the verity of which is unquestionable and the negation of which is unthinkable they are not likely to continue very long as a people. Hence it is time for us to give heed to the call and to hear in that call the summons to every Jew to achieve, for himself, a conception of God to which he may be devoted with all his mind, with all his soul and with all his might.

If systematic writing had not come to me with such hardship I would have loved to write a book on the psychological and social implications of the sentiment of holiness. I am sure I would have dealt more adequately with the subject than Otto. Some day, perhaps, if God grants me health, I shall make a try at it.

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Sunday, October 13, 1929

I have again allowed a good many weeks to slip by without putting on the Tephilin in the morning and reciting the Hebrew prayers. When I had to address the Bar Mitzvah yesterday morning I was naturally



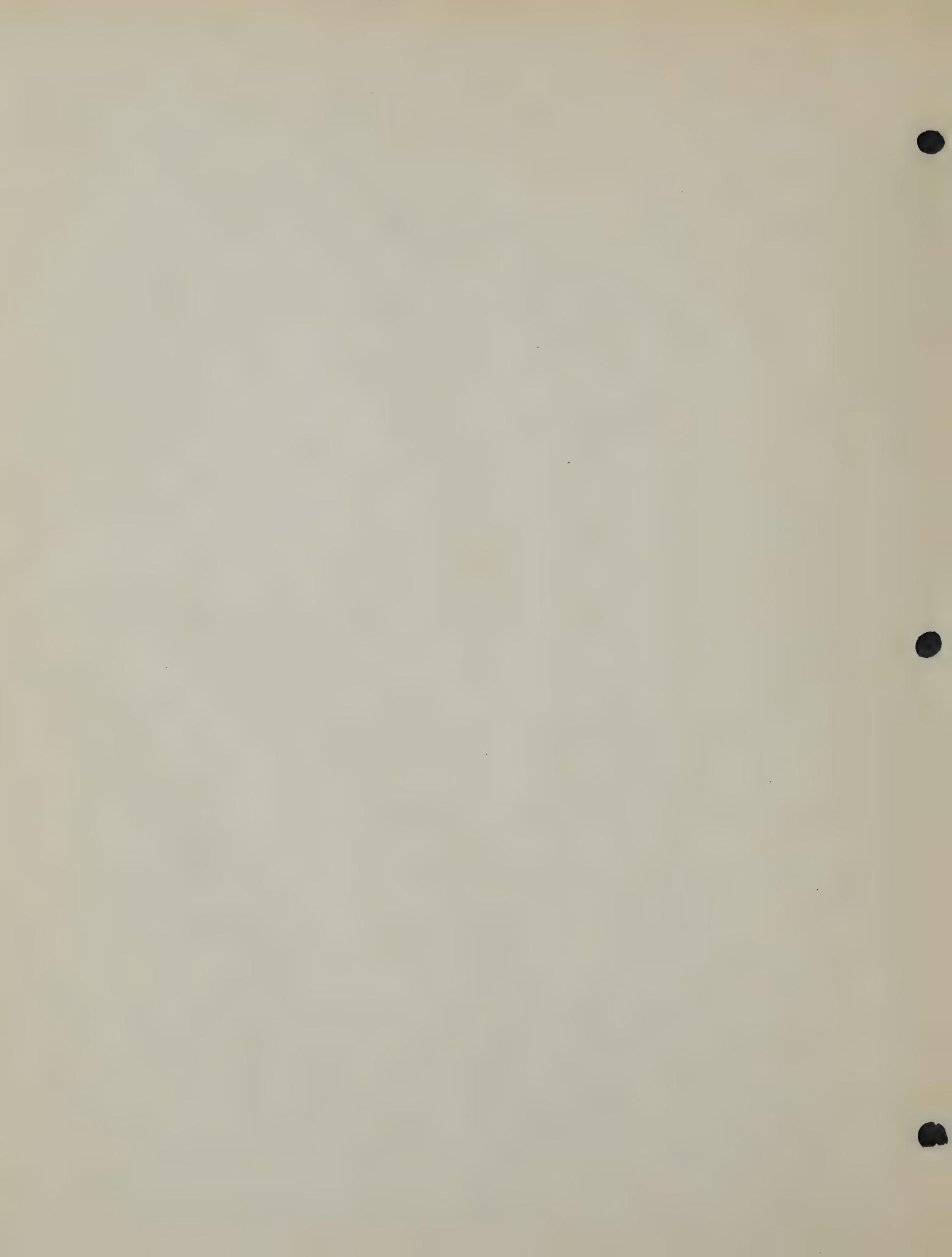
unable to make ~~Tuff~~ Tephilin the theme of my remarks to him. In the afternoon a young man by the name Stocker called on me. I had invited him to come so that I might discuss the possibility of organizing a group of lay students to take up the study of modern philosophic and religious problems. He too asked me "Why put on Tephilin?" I justified the ceremony on the ground of the four biblical sections contained in the Tephilin, assuming, of course, that those sections be reinterpreted in terms of modern spiritual aspirations. I couldn't wait till this morning to make good by act what I justified so glibly by talk. The fact that it is Erev Yom Kippur has added to my desire to act as well as to feel Jewishly. But the formal prayers did not satisfy so I turned to "A Book of Prayers" by McComb and there I found the following which just suited me in my present mood.

"Help us to make religion a thing so beautiful that all men may be won to surrender to its power. Let us manifest in our lives its sweetness and excellency its free and ennobling spirit. Forbid that we should go up and down the world with melancholy looks and dejected visage, lest we should repel men from entering Thy Kingdom. Rather, may we walk in the freedom and joy of faith and with Thy new song in our mouths so that man looking at us may learn to trust and to love Thee."

* * *

Wednesday, October 16, 1929

The Yom Kippur services came up to the standard of the previous years. The subject of the sermon I delivered was "A Minimum Judaism." The sermon too came up to the standard of my Y_om Kippur sermons which during the last seven years, i.e. since I left the Center, has been rather high. Whether it is the susceptibility of the audience or the nature of the subject which is usually taken from the problem of Judaism as a whole, whatever the cause may be, I have been speaking on Y_om Kippur nights with greater ease, fluency and effectiveness.



I want to record the English prayers and other readings that added to the impressiveness of the service.

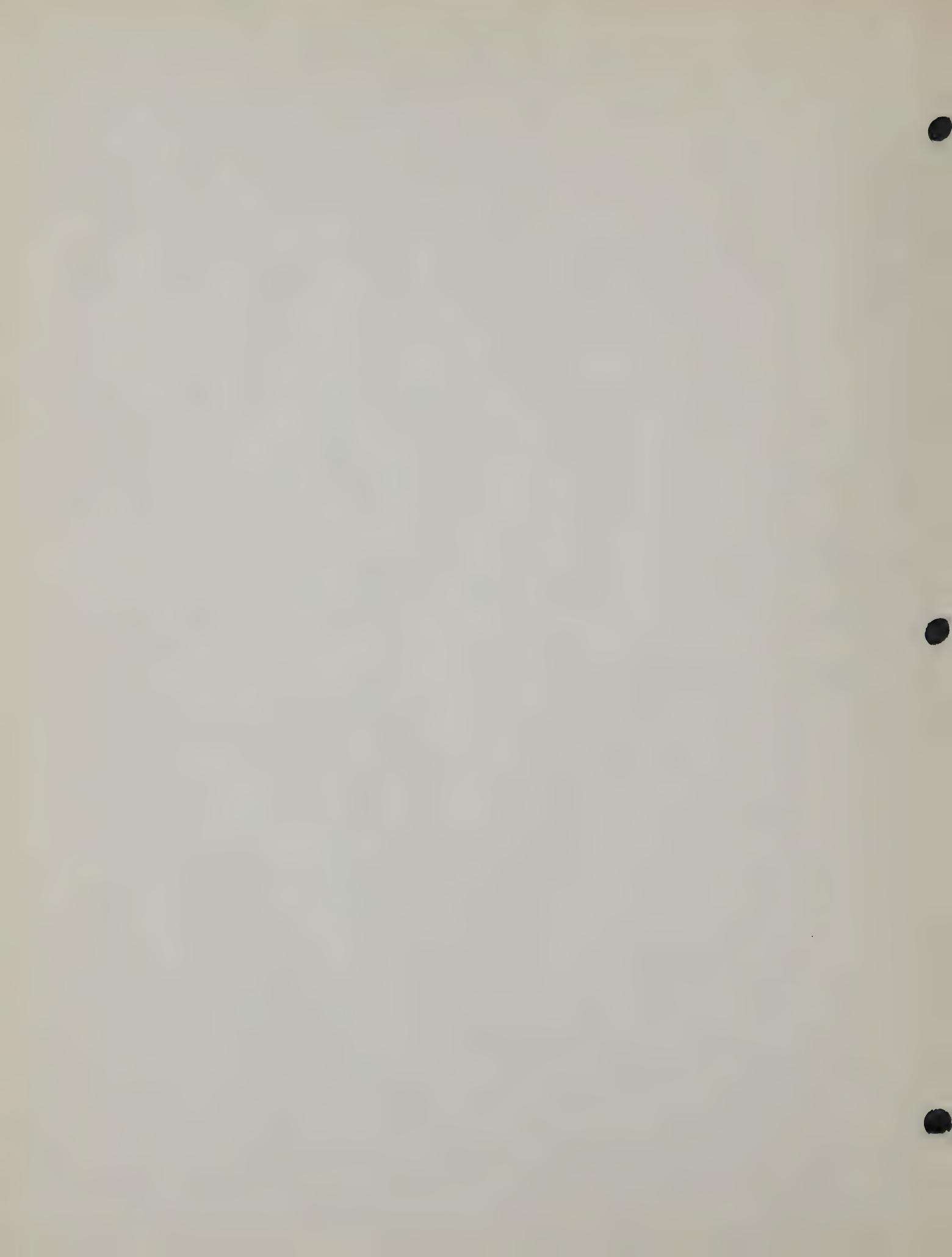
Before p.192 on Yom Kippur night I read the prayer from the Union Prayer Book. During the day, after the Haftarah of Sheharit, I read from the Union Prayer Book, p. 294 before Mussaph I read the selections entitled Confessions in Mattuck's Prayer Book. The Selihot of Musaf consisted of selections from Zung's little book on the Sufferings of the Jews in the Middle Ages.

This afternoon Stepehn S. Wise called up to ask me to speak at East Hall in place of Scharfarber of Philadelphia who was originally scheduled to speak. I tried to excuse myself on the ground that I have to attend an important Seminary Faculty meeting. He replied "the only important faculty meeting of the Seminary will be the one in which your resignation will be accepted ultimately and irrevocably."

* * *

Thursday, October 17, 1929

Leon B. Horowitz, Signer and Jacob Grossman spent both Tuesday night and last night at my house ffrom 8:30 till 1:00 working with me on the Succoth sermons. Horowitz invited discussion of dher ideas besides those bearing on the sermon. He is generally regarded as rather crude and loud in his behavior. (From a remark that he dropped I gather that his wife whom he married recently will tone him down.) These traits show themselves in his handling of religious ideas. The question of their truth or function doesn't concern him. What he is interested in is in what way will they help him to impress his hearers. He has no working conception of God and excuses himself on the ground that God is incomprehensible. When he told me that last night I sailed into him, of course, not in a spirit of hostility, but of denunciation of his self-complacent agnosticism. I could forgive him his agnosticism if he hadn't all the time beeing singing the praises of all forms of



idolatry and taking me to task for trying to get the people to understand what they are saying when they recite their prayers.

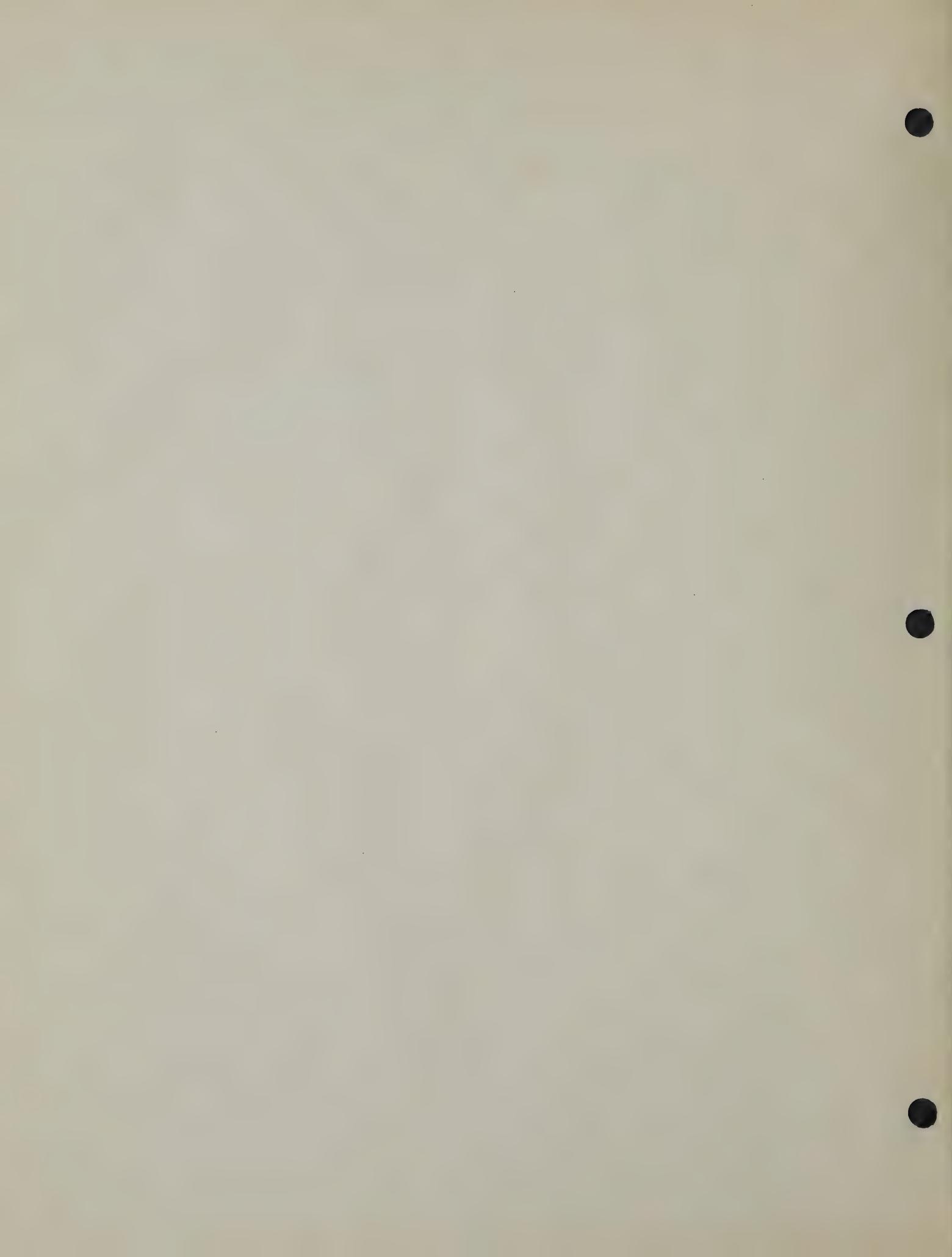
This morning I took part in the meeting of the committee on scholarships. A heated discussion arose between Finkelstein and Davidson when the name of a student by the name of Rabinowitz came up. Davidson was in favor of granting Rabinowitz a double scholarship of \$500. Finkelstein demurred on the ground that Rabinowitz refused to preach during the High Holidays because he thought the remuneration of \$100 which was offered to him too small. Davidson in his reply dragged in the name of Meyer, one of this year's graduates, who preached at the Seminary during the holidays. What it had to do with the case of R. I do not know, but it gave Davidson a chance to attack me. Characterizing Meyer's preaching as disgraceful and alluding to the fact that Meyer knew of no better way of introducing his sermon than by quoting from a magazine article, he turned around to me and said "And that is due to your influence." I made Davidson realize that I considered this remark as highly insulting. He apologized, but it will take a long time for the bitterness it gave rise to between me and him to subside. I told him that in his attitude to me he was swayed by prejudice and p.194 .

Much as I disliked having to speak at Earl Hall I went through with it. Having been warned by Wise that I would be heckled by some Arab students, I did not give the Arab student who tried to draw me into a discussion of Zionism a chance to get far.

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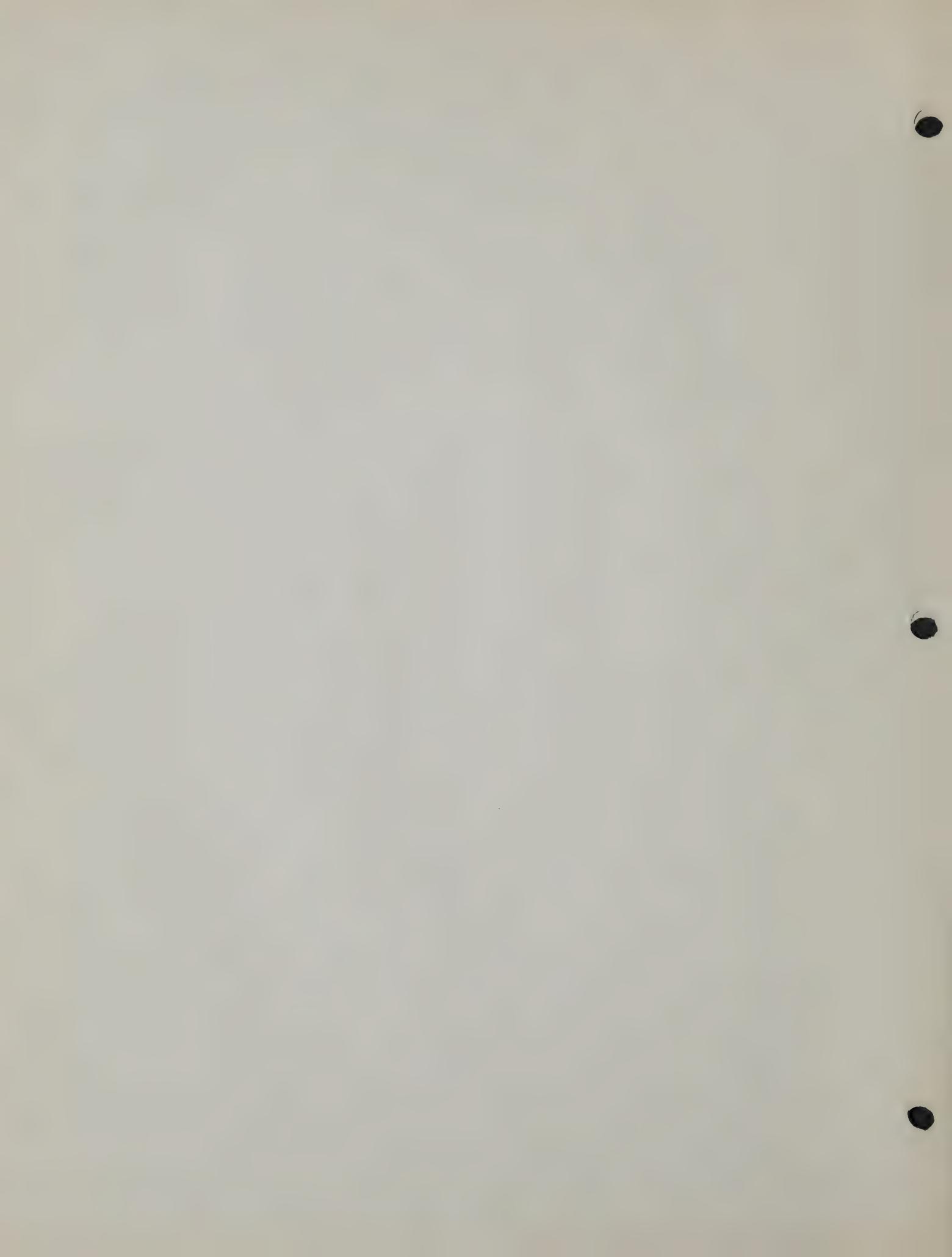
Friday, October 25, 1929

Although I am not dawdling I have been making very little progress with my writing. Writing comes to me with such difficulty that no matter how trivial the thing I have to write may be it always



calls for considerable mental effort on my part. Dictating a reply to an invitation to lecture is liable to take me fifteen minutes and to fray my nerves. In one of my frequent spells of moral weakness which prevent me from refusing an invitation to speak or write I promised a certain Dr. Miller that I would write an introduction to an illustrated edition of Ruth which he intends to publish. I must have spent at least ten hours on that introduction which consists of about 350 words. I had to read up whatever I have available concerning the book of Ruth only to find in the end that unless I could discover some original approach I would have nothing to say.

When I received a facsimile copy of the last part of Marshall's letter to Rosenwald I lived through the mental tortures which the Seminary authorities mete out to me from time to time whenever they fail to include me among the members of the faculty who add prestige to the Seminary. At every Seminary gathering at which special mention is made of Max Ginzberg or Davidson my name is ignored. No matter how little I may amount to in the world of scholarship, I believe I have done more to direct the minds of the students to the fundamental problems of Jewish life than the other men with their scholastic achievements. And I surely could have contributed a great deal more, if I were given the opportunity to teach what I am entitled to teach. I cannot of course blame the trustees. Men like Marshall and Stroock are impressed by the sight of the many books which the others publish, regardless of the value which those books have for Jewish life. The thought in the minds of these trustees is that when Gentile scholars will see these books they will be impressed. What greater service can one render Jewish life? The fact that these members of the faculty take smug and cynical attitude toward the problem of the future of Judaism, they they do not make the least attempt to correlate what they teach with spiritual needs of the Jews at the present time, ~~they~~ even suspected by the trustees. It's all wrong.



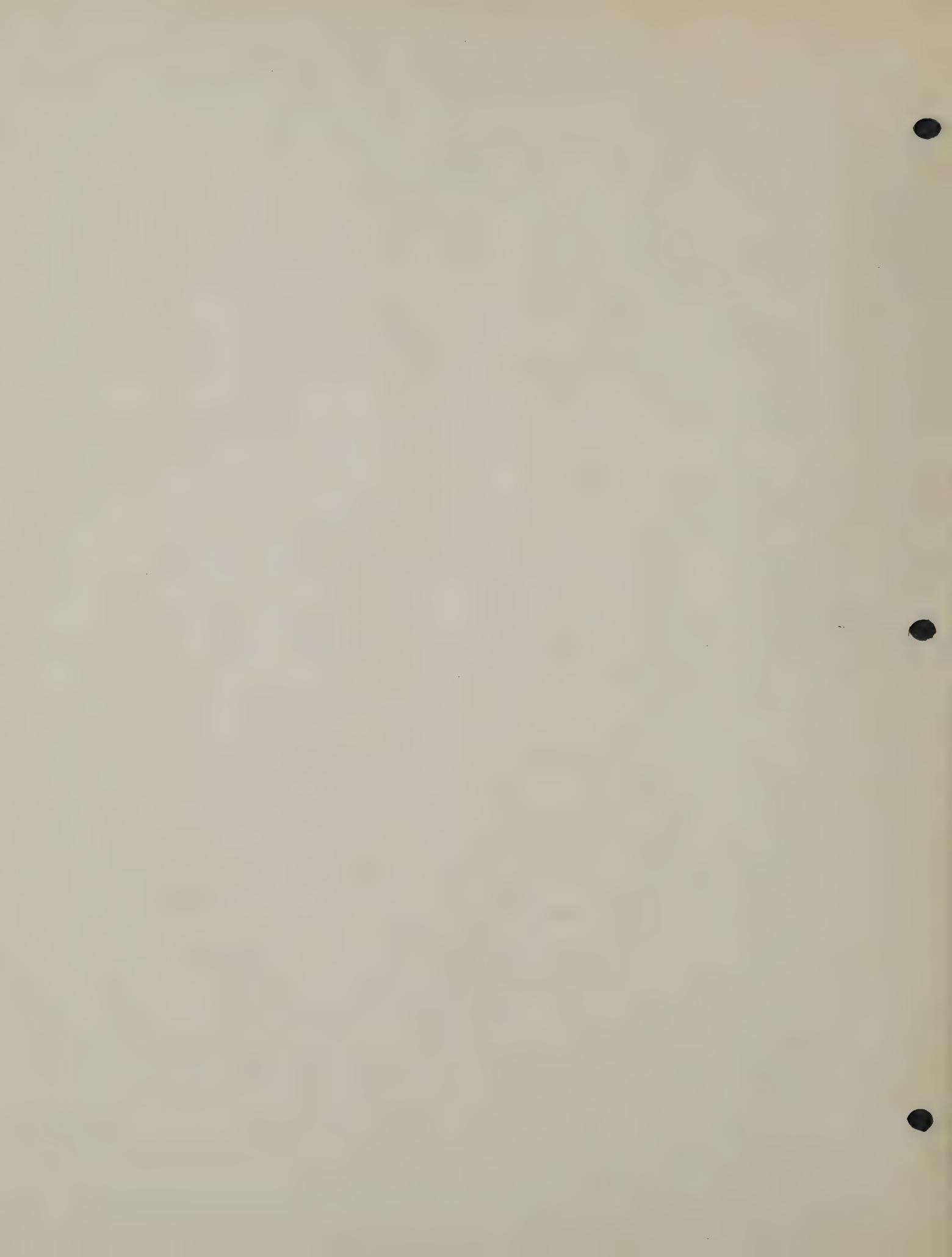
I'm a failure not only in the Seminary and in the S.A.J. but even in my own home. Despite all my yearnings to beatify Jewish life, to enrich it with song and poetry and dance, I do not get the least co-operation from any member of my family. I had hoped that Judith with her knowledge of music would bring the Shekinah into our household on Friday nights. I thought that my children would ask me to read or speak Hebrew with them. All these dreams of mine have proved to be nothing but illusions. It seems that I am doomed to live out the rest of my days in a sort of prison made for me by aspirations and tastes which separate me from my own wife and children.

* * *

Sunday, November 3, 1929

I keep on working steadily so long as my health is good. In my eagerness to get in as much work as possible I would like to take an hour off from my sleep or to skip a meal, but the moment I deviate from the routine of $7\frac{1}{2}$ hours sleep and three meatless meals a day I am rendered unfit for the next two to three days.

I have not been able to do any studying of Bible and Talmud for the last few months. All my time is taken up with reading and thinking about the problem of religion. Whenever I allow a long time to elapse without the study of Hebrew texts I experience a sense of inferiority especially when I come to the Seminary. The fact is that the Hebrew texts do not furnish ideas to live by. They merely furnish the problem how to render them vital and significant. But to one like myself who is sensitive to the opinion of others, they are indispensable as a means of maintaining my standing among those who put a premium upon text knowledge. It's the old story of idolatry over again. My colleagues are worshippers of dead letters just as our ancestors were worshippers of lifeless images. To be a prophet one must not only be an



Iconoclast but also be able to speak in the name of the living God. Since in spite of all my strenuous searching I have not yet found Israel's living God and cannot speak in his name, I must abide with the idolaters and imitate their ways.

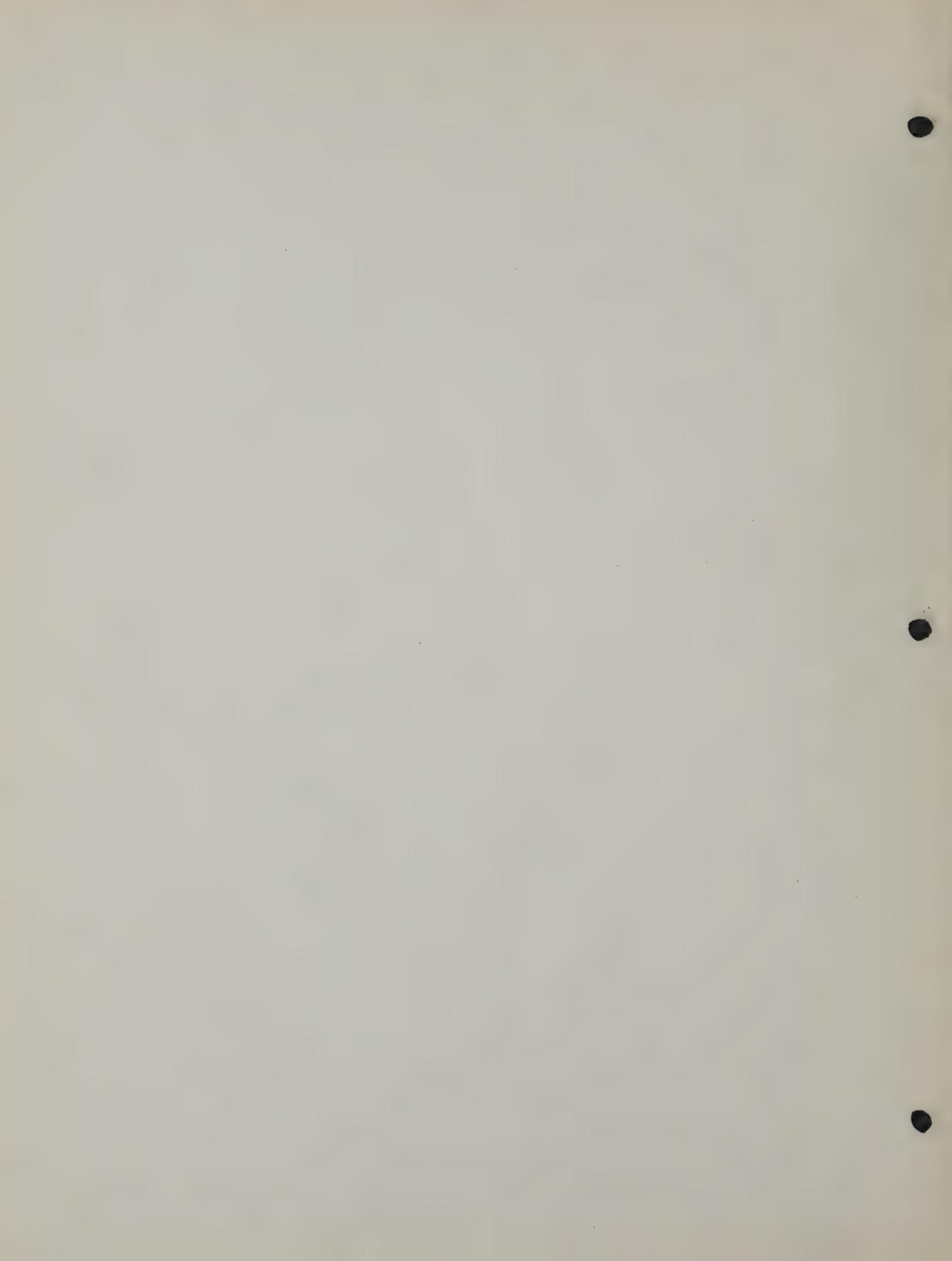
In a book which has appeared recently "The Ascent of Humanity" by Gerald Heard, there is an analysis of the inner experiences of the leader in whom the ~~xxx~~ phenomenon of human individuality comes to light. That analysis is a true picture of what I have to put up with (especially p. 73). It explains quite clearly why I am so lonely.

Incidentally, I want to say that the idea developed in that book has been one of my working beliefs. I touched upon it in the conception of God as Redeemer, where I treated the emergence of individual personality as an evidence of human progress and of the meaning of history.

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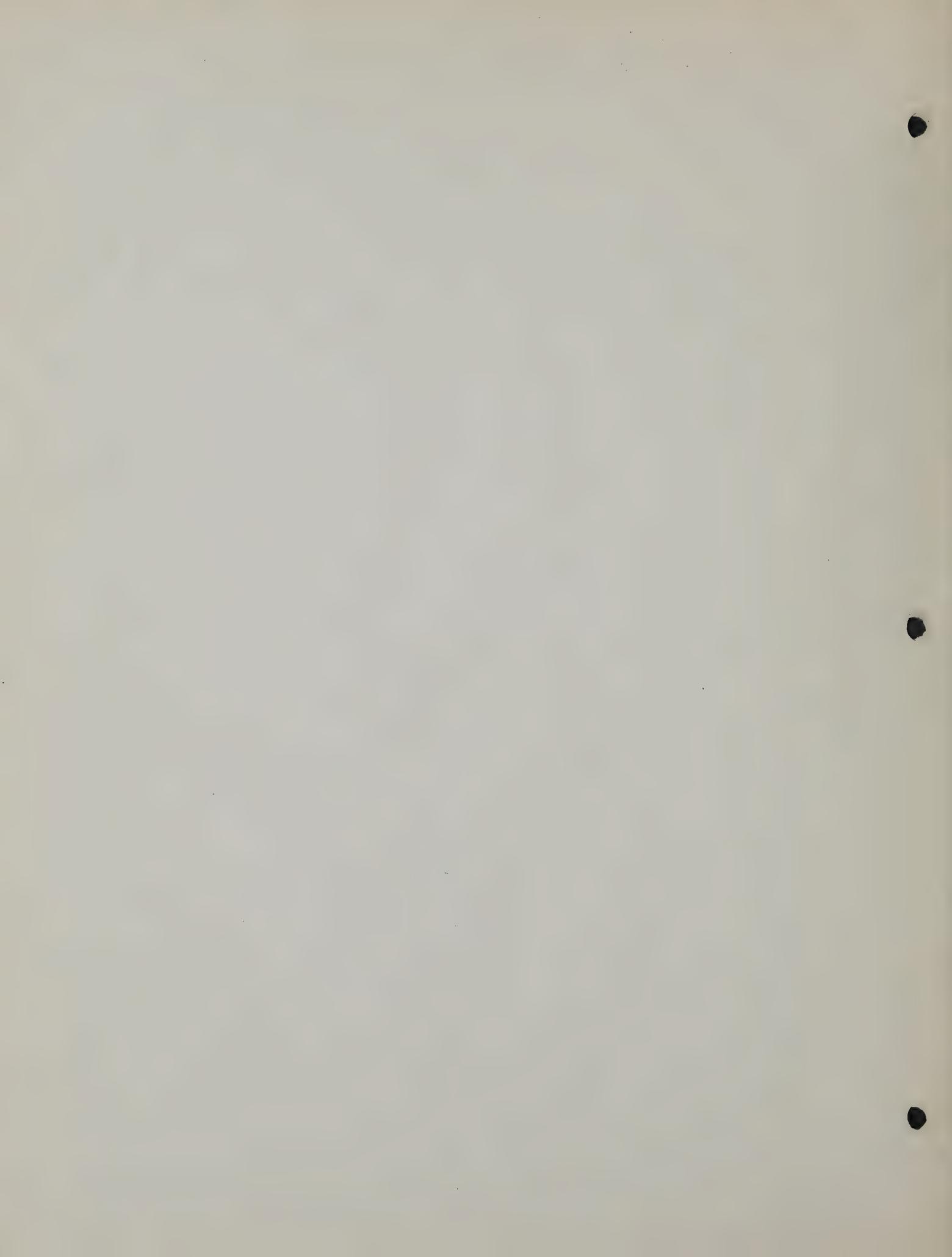
Thursday, November 7, 1929

Two artistic creations afforded me this week that soul stirring experience which Aristotle ascribes to tragedy. One was the play Sea Gull by ~~xxx~~ Tchekov, and the other the story of p.196 . In the former I beheld a picture of my intellectual frustration, in the latter a picture of my spiritual frustration. In the young aspiring writer disgusted with the conventional literature and play writing of his day yet unable to make his mark in the world I saw myself in my passionate rebellion against the dryasdust Jewish learning which is damming up the ~~xxx~~ fountains of spiritual self-expression for lack of which Jewish life is languishing today. Yet what ~~I~~ have/produced to justify my rebellion? In the religious ecstasy depicted in the story of I saw the kind of response I should have given my life to be able to call forth. If I had possessed the power of song and poetry or at least of wit I might have succeeded in winning men's hearts for



God and Israel. Men cannot be reached through their minds. This week Mayor Walker was reelected by an overwhelming majority. One of the candidates that ran against him was Norman Thomas, an idealist, a thinker, a born leader. He was backed by the best of New York citizenry, Dewey, Fosdick, Wise, Brown, etc. The World and the Telegram had come out for him. Yet he got about one fourth the votes that Mayor Walker got. Of what influence then is all that intellectual leadership? Only those who possess the qualifications of Baal Shem Tov and his successors will be able to save Judaism. But is it conceivable that such men shall ever arise? Can qualifications like those of the great Hassidic leaders survive in an age of science? Do we want a masculine edition of Mary Baker Eddy? even if such a one could appear? In other words, Is it not possible to be both sane and poetic? I think it is. But I am not authority since all I can claim is a measure of sanity. I have a good deal of poetry in me, but it is absolutely inarticulate. Is it not a fact that in the process of becoming articulate one has to surrender part of his sanity?

After the artist Tepfer spoiled the plastilene bust that I had made of father I worked for hours trying in vain to restore the resemblance which it had borne to father. The work began to eat into my time. I became so disgusted that I effaced the bust completely. The sense of frustration in so insignificant a matter gave me no rest. I made another attempt this week and after working on it for about four hours I succeeded in bringing out even a more striking resemblance than in the original bust. Although the few hours I spent on that work this week prevented me from doing my regular chore of writing, I am not a bit sorry because I feel that at least in the matter of discovering some hobby for myself I need not be a complete failure.



Although I expressed on p. 195 keen disappointment over the fact that my wife and children do not share my spiritual interests, in justice to them I must state that their tasks and their associations are such as to render their active sharing of my spiritual interests physically and mentally impossible. They live as much of the Jewish life as can reasonably be expected of them. Their goodness and lovable ness to each other and to me are the chief source of the joy I get out of life. For this I am grateful to God and to them.

* * *

Friday, November 8, 1929

Apparently when one is able and strong willed one may achieve great things even with indifferent health. Take the case of Briand, Philip Snowden managed to get into Downing St. despite his grievous handicap of body.

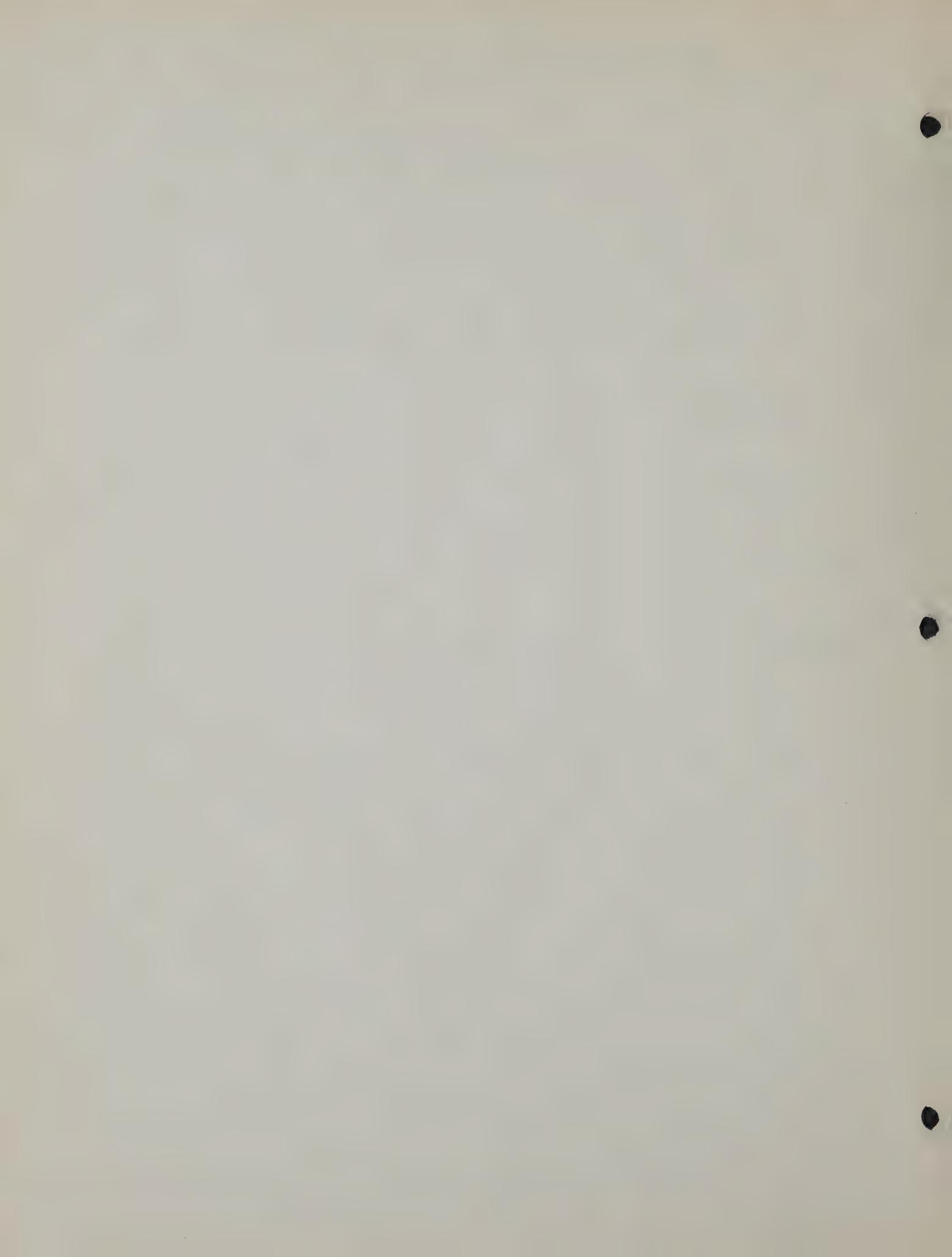
* * *

Monday, November 11, 1929, 12:15 A.M.

AB

I just spent one of the most rewarding and inspiring hours of my life in talking with my own dear Judith. The conversation began with an account she gave me of a recent book called "Fear." My joy was unbounded when I learned that the book struck a responsive chord in her and that she found herself in agreement with its main thesis as to the value and efficacy of prayer. Could I have wished for anything better than to hear her say that every time she passed the small chapel of the Brooklyn Jewish Center where the old men prayed and studied she would have given anything in the world to go in and join them in prayer? She hungers for the serenity which only those old men seem to be able to derive from their prayers. The fact that they need and enjoy those prayers makes her long to pray among them. She finds it hard to pray at our S.A.J. services.

The conversation then turned to a thought that I had discussed



with her some time ago: the use of the drama as project in education. It was then that there occurred to me the idea that we ought to find some dramatic religious personality in our Jewish past whom we might make the center of a drama that would have the kind of spiritual significance that the Christ Story has for the Oberammergau players. With all the wealth of material at our disposal, why can we Jews not find a group of young people ready to consecrate themselves morally, spiritually and artistically to the dramatic presentation of some one of our spiritual heroes in whom the passion the greatness and the tragedy of our entire national career would seem to have been focused. It did not take me long to discover such a hero in Jeremiah.

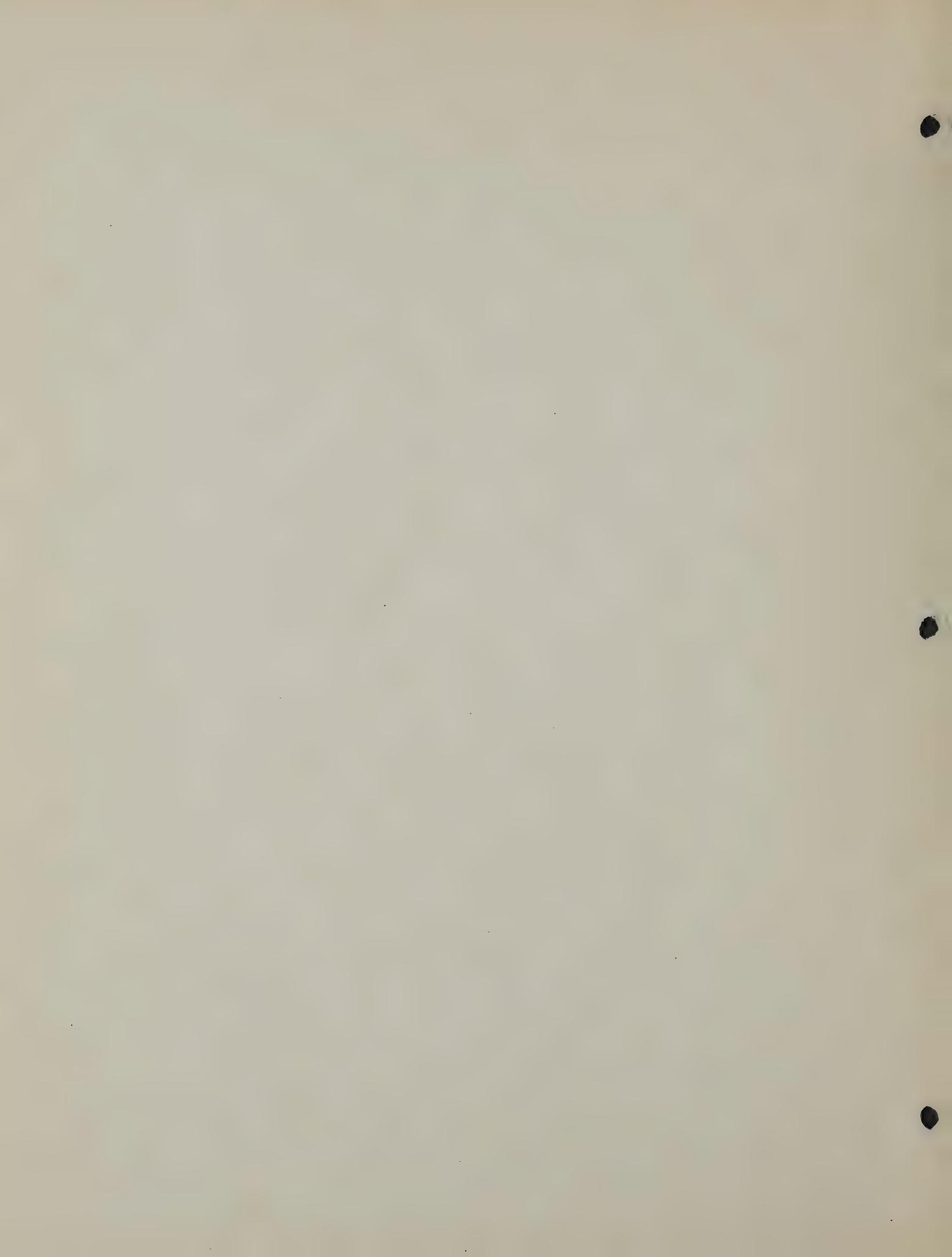
Now there is the group of young people of the Teachers Institute whom I am to meet twice a month in my house. Why not propose this plan to them? Why not get them to consecrate themselves to the dramatization in worthy form of the personality of Jeremiah? As I bubble over with enthusiasm my darling Judith reminds me that I must not expect the young people to take at once to this idea. They are sophisticated and not sufficiently sensitized to the tremendous potentialities of such an undertaking. I told her I shall take what she says into account and be patient and persistent in my effort to convince them of the worthwhileness of the undertaking.

Whatever may come of the plan, I pray to God that I may never forget the joy which was mine this last hour, and that He may grant my Judith the strength and opportunity to radiate to an ever widening circle the kind of happiness she imported to me tonight.

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Thursday, November 14, 1929

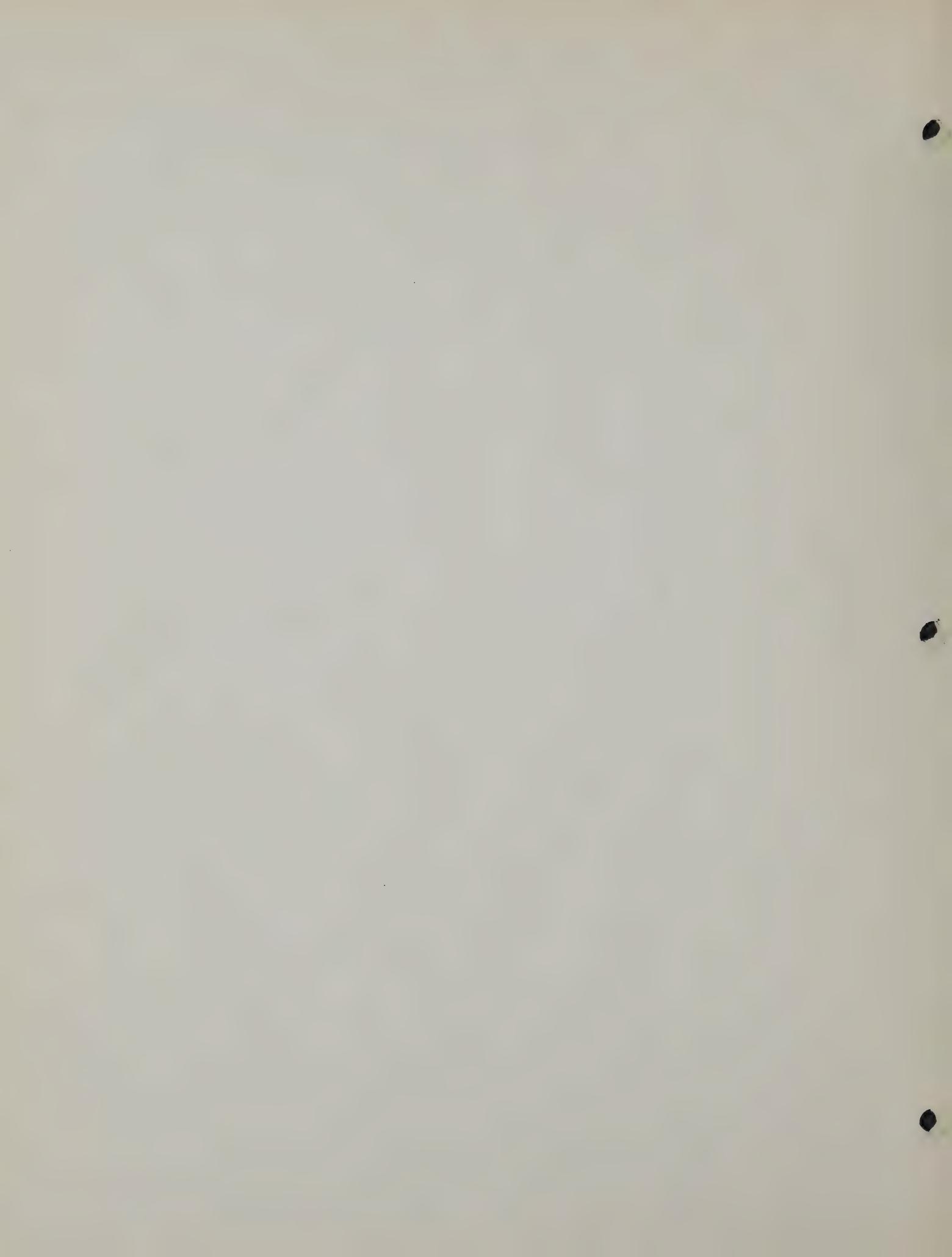
No matter how hard I try to conquer my tendency to moodiness by focussing my attention on the numerous advantages which I possess and enjoy I am worsted in the struggle. I wish some one would write a



series of prayers for people like we who are forever engaged in this losing fight against what is after all a kind of selfish preoccupation.

I ascribe my present state of depression to two specific occurrences. One took place at the Seminary. Both in the Midrash hour and in the Homiletics period I committed serious mistakes. In the Midrash hour I gave a wrong interpretation to the expression p.199 . Gelb set me right. In the Homiletics hour I made a wrong statement about the relation of the religious to the philosophic conception of God. Eisenstein questioned the correctness of my statement but I failed to discover what was wrong with it until today. At the time I gave some forced answer which I am sure was unsatisfactory. Of course now I know more than I did before I came to class yesterday, but the thought that I should have made two serious mistakes in one day's teaching rankles. At the same time I am grateful for what I did learn. In the Midrash class right after I realized my error Eisenstein asked me what ~~was~~ the significance of the doctrine was. Although I had not thought about that question before I was able to give immediately what I regard as a highly satisfactory answer. I said that the concept of is the expression of a vague intuition even in rabbinic Judaism that God must be conceived as being subject to some kind of self-limitation. Thanks to the influence of philosophy God was purged of the notion of arbitrariness. The notion that even God could not change his decree after He set His seal to it is a step in the direction of eliminating the element of arbitrariness from the conception of God.

The second occurrence which put me in a bad humor was the arrival of the first volume of the Outline of Jewish knowledge gotten out by Israel Goldberg and S. Benderly. It was accompanied by an annoying letter in which he tried to explain why he had not submitted to me the manuscript of the book for criticism. I didn't mind that. What I did mind was that another book has been added to numerous forces



that are keeping Jewish ideas in a state of helpless chaos. Every one who will read it will carry away the impression that the traditional view of the beginnings of Judaism is to be taken as a picture of what actually happened. It is my firm conviction that nothing so incapacitates the Jewish people for the readjustment that it must make in order to survive as the traditional view of the beginnings of Judaism. It is just as wrong to promulgate that view now, as it is to teach the anthropomorphic conception of God.

In the totally reckless autocratic and irresponsible fashion in which Benderly has been acting he included my name in the general foreword where I am mentioned as one of those whose assistance the authors gratefully acknowledged.

* * *

Monday, November 18, 1929

Last weekend Lena and I spent at Woonsocket, R.I. I went there to officiate at the Bar Mitzvah celebration of Arthur Darman's son Morton. Arthur Darman is in some ways an unusual type of Jew. He is between 35 and 40, short and stout with a rather kindly and well formed though somewhat chubby face. Though lacking education he possesses a high degree of intelligence, is extremely efficient, generous in contributing to all kinds of causes and has a highly developed sense of social and religious idealism. In a community of 175 Jewish families he is the only one who has shown himself capable of Jewish leadership. So long as he was willing to shoulder the responsibility of getting the funds for the congregation and contributing a considerable amount himself, there was an active congregation with a rabbi, a religious school and the usual congregational activities. As soon as he found himself unable to take the leading part in the maintenance of the congregation everything went to pieces.

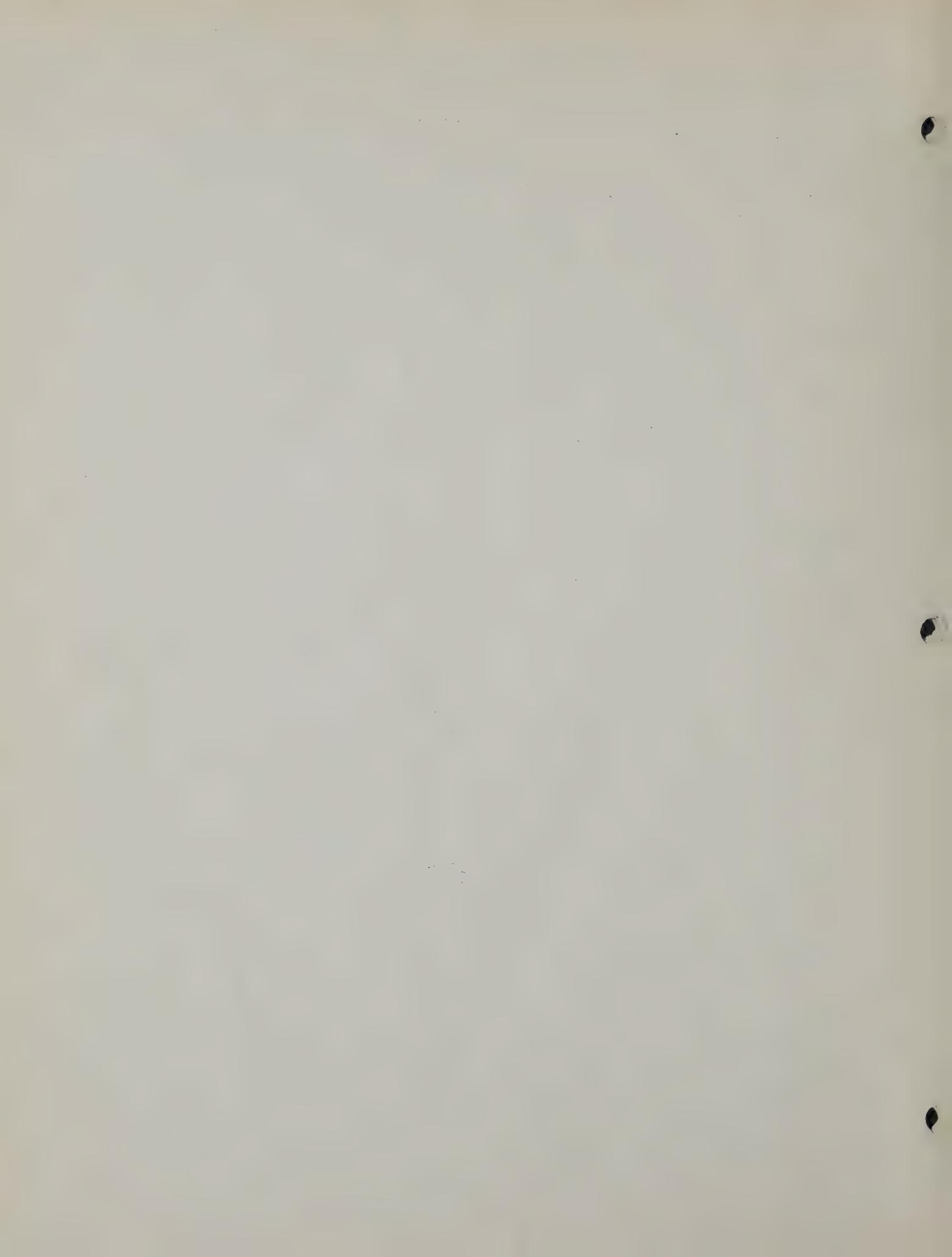


I got to know Darman through my brother-in-law Israeli who was rabbi in Woonsocket for a few years. He has kept up his friendship with me by becoming a member of the SAJ. What I must admire about both him and his wife is the intense interest which they display in the Jewish education of their two children. Darman has been having a private teacher for them and paying him liberally. The boy has learned far more Hebrew for his age than it is possible for me to get any one of the members' children of the SAJ here to learn.

When therefore Morton was to become Bar-Mitzvah I did not hesitate for one moment in accepting Darman's invitation to come to Woonsocket to officiate at the ceremony. I left with the 10 o'clock train and got to Woonsocket about 3:00. Darman took me at once to the synagogue and he showed me how everything was fixed up for the great occasion. I suggested a few changes, among them the placing of the reading desk for the Torah on top of the platform facing the audience. This is contrary to Orthodox practice but I could have my way and so I suggested this arrangement which he gladly carried out.

In the morning the service was conducted in much finer fashion than I had expected. Morton led in the prayers almost without a hitch. There were quite a few gentiles in the audience among them Governor Case of Rhode Island and his wife, the Mayor of Woonsocket and his wife and a few other notables. My talk to the boy and the sermon on the Meaning of Faith were simple to the point and in good form. I am happy indeed to have contributed to the happiness of the Darman family.

The Governor's wife, admiring the way in which Morton led in the prayers said to him "You ought to become a rabbi." A certain Rev. Levinson, a combination of Mehol, Shohet, Hazan, Maggid hearing her say this remarked, "Why should he be a rabbi? He doesn't need it to make a living."



Reading this morning in the Jewish Daily Bulletin about Magnes' favoring the establishment of a parliament in Palestine brings back to my mind the remark he made after he heard me deliver my sermon at the Jewish Center on "An Eye for Events" (April 29, 1921) in which I compared the Balfour Declaration to Cyne's Decree. "Do you really believe that our salvation will come from England?" He is certainly to be admired for his consistency throughout the war and since then in his adherence to pacifism at all costs. There is undoubtedly a good deal in him of that which we admire in great spiritual leaders and prophets -- a defiance or rather a transcendence of what to us ordinary people appear as realities.

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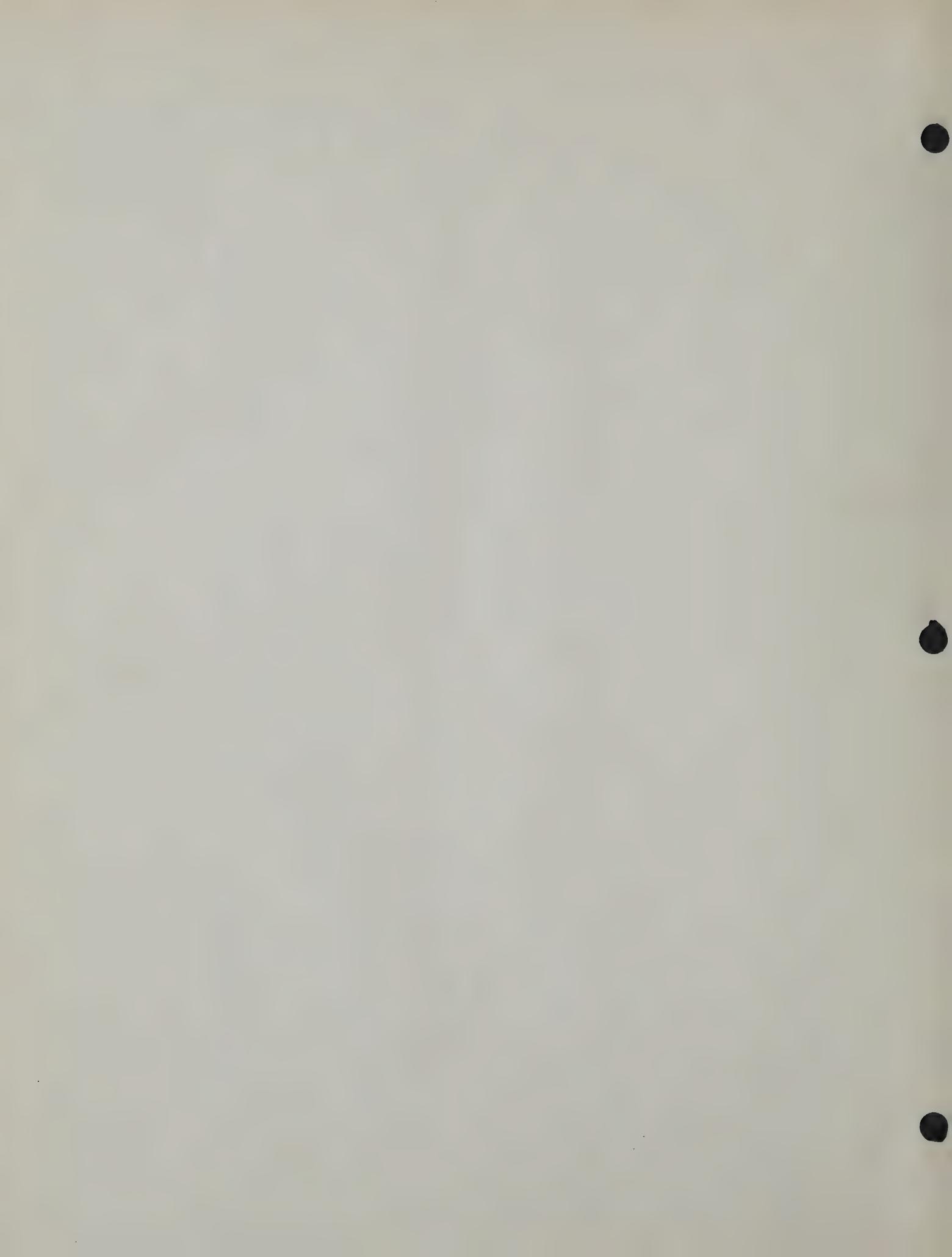
On the way to Woonsocket and back I read Whiteheads' new little book "The Function of Reason." It was an eye opener to me. I find Whitehead's ~~philosophy~~ philosophy fills the void created by Dewey's Pragmatism. It comes in very handy at the present time when I am working on the problem of spiritual religion. I am at present in the process of changing my mind about the relation of religion to philosophy. I have for many years been working on the assumption that the function (pragmatic significance) of the philosophic conception of God is different from that of religion. The conclusion which is crystallizing itself in my mind at present is that philosophy which is the expression not of the group but of the individual mind represents the principle of progress, reason and individualism in the religion of the group. If there is to be such a thing as spiritual religion it has to consist mainly in permitting the last two of the three functions which religion had in the past (1. to transform the environment; 2. to inculcate and substantiate it by an ethical order of life; 3. to bring salvation) to be ~~xxxxx~~ reevaluated in terms of the ever increasing experience not of the particular group which professes the religion



but of the human race as a whole. If then faith and salvation are to be proved tenable as matters of individual conviction it is essential that we have resort to philosophy and metaphysics for a conception of God compatible with our present knowledge of the universe and of human nature. A thinker like Whitehead contributes considerably in some of his other writings I read to a metaphysical conception of God. / "The Function of Reason" I have learned to appreciate the importance of the Greek contribution to the conception of God.

As I analyze the reasons for my having held out so long against recognizing the religious value of the philosophic conception of God I find that they arose from the reluctance to surrender the notion that the Jews have contributed to the God idea more than the Greeks. I confess that it was the Jewish chauvinism in me which blinded me to the appreciation of the fact that it is after all Greek philosophy which has both criticized traditional religion and has evolved rational substitutes for the traditional God idea. It is indeed a great blow to my Jewish pride to have to admit that in the formulation of spiritual religion of the future we have to fall back upon the method of individual reasoning on the basis of human experience to arrive at a conception of God. Maimonides with his lack of historical background was at least able to ascribe to tradition a value coordinate with that of philosophy. We, however, are constrained at best to prove that tradition has vague intuitions and subconscious anticipations of that which the method of philosophy has enabled us to grasp consciously and clearly.

The appended letter by Lissauer is from one of the Seminary graduates who was in my class a number of years ago. As a movement within Jewish civilization Lissauer's reform would be a godsend. But there is very little likelihood of his movement being more than one of the many sporadic attempts at reforming religion in general, an attempt



which has nothing to do with Jewish civilization because those that
?p.203 it don't care a button for Jewish civilization. The way to
reform religion in general is to abolish the organizations specially
dedicated to religion solely, for religion that is not at the same time
a part of the cultural life of a group should be purely individual af-
fair.

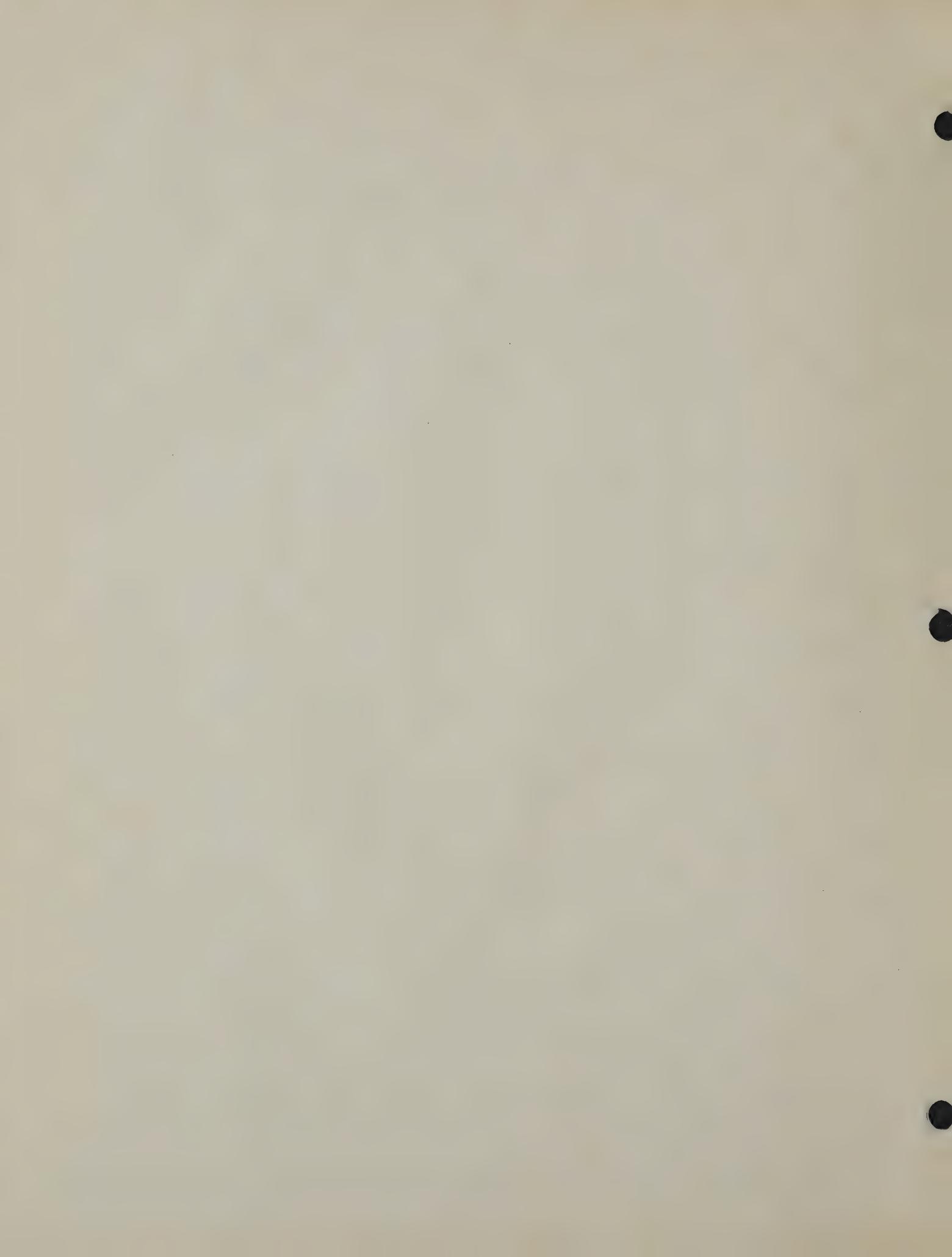
Last night I met a group of Teachers Institute students. In
the group there were also four graduates. I found them very intelli-
gent and receptive. The meetings with me are scheduled to take place
twice a month and twice a month they will meet by themselves. One of
the sessions which they are to hold by themselves they will try to
work out what I termed the Jewish Passion Play with Jeremiah as the
hero of the play.

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Wednesday, November 20, 1929

I enjoyed my work at the Seminary today for a change. I
felt well physically. I was sure of the ground I covered, and I made
some interesting points in each of the hours.

This evening I spent 3 hours with two students, Eisenstein
and J. Friedman. From J. Friedman I learned a few facts about the moral
standards of the student body as a whole which have added to my dis-
heartenment about the Jewish situation. In a few years these men will
be entrusted with the moral and spiritual leadership of at least 50
to 60 communities. When I think of how wanting these men are in the
observance of the elementary principles of uprightness and good will
in their dealings with one another I deplore that the destiny of those
communities should be entrusted in their hands. Friedman, who is
their president this year, is by no means a luminary in learning and
intelligence, but at least he seems to have enough of an ethical sense



to be revolted by the unethical conduct of the students. Here are some of the facts mentioned to me:

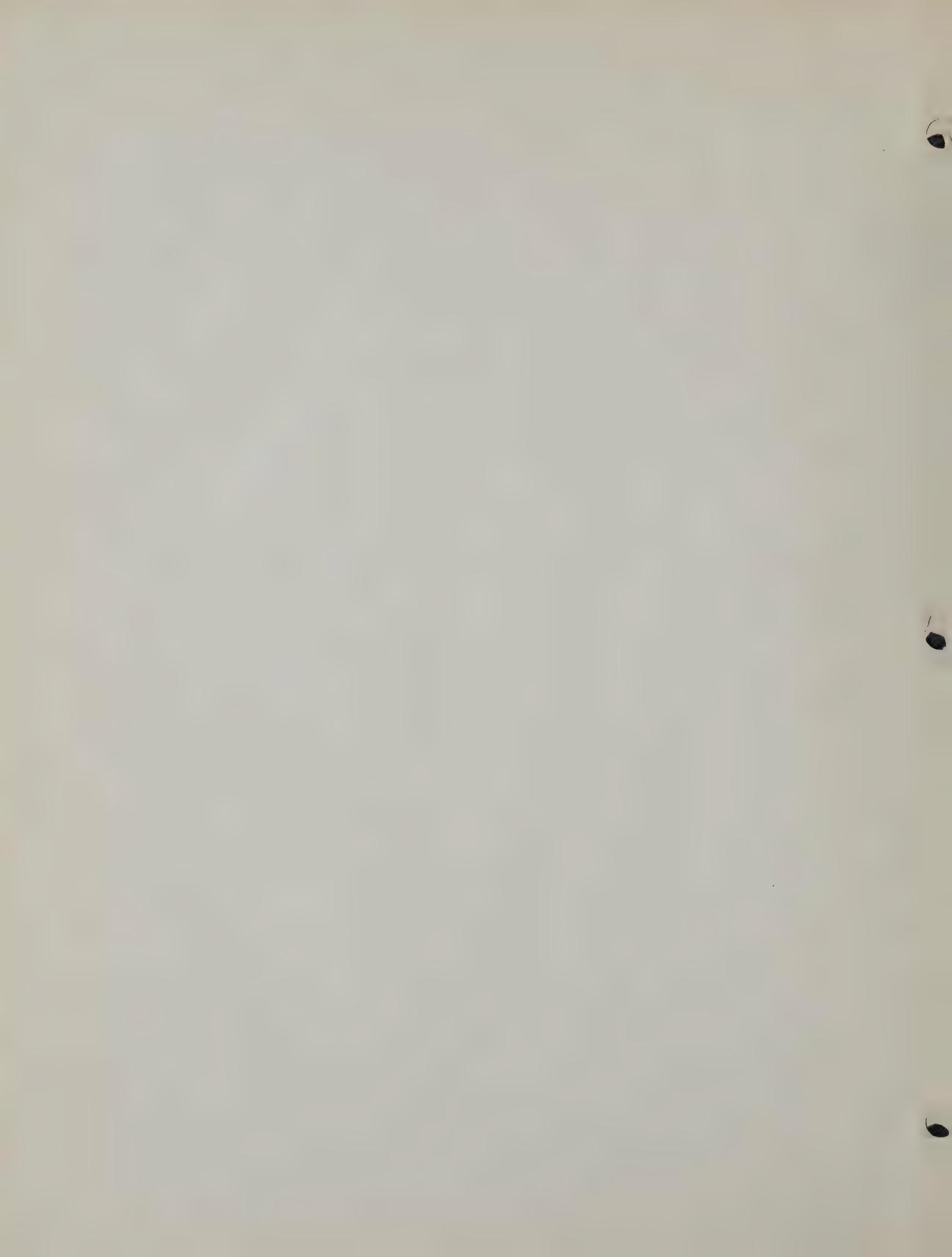
1. Routenberg agreed before the summer to take charge of finding Holiday positions for the men on condition that he would be paid 5% of what they would receive. The men have received enough to entitle him to about \$400. Of that amount only \$30 or \$40 has thus far been paid to him and he has a hard time collecting the rest of what the men owe him.

2. The student body is divided into cliques, each clique trying to oppose and obstruct every other at every possible opportunity. Instead of a spirit of co-operation dissension reigns supreme.

3. The honor system at examinations is violated by a number of students. The system in vogue whereby students keep on working at examinations from 9:00 to 4:00 with recess for lunch presents a source of temptation to consult each other and refer to notes.

It is evident that it is a crime for the Seminary to leave these men, whose home background is of the Orthodox type which attaches little significance to the elementary principles of honesty and good will entirely to themselves without a guiding and restraining hand. Their native pettiness, quarrelsomeness and selfishness are accentuated in their relationships with one another, because nothing whatever is done to direct those relationships into the channel of ethical character.

My warmest admiration for Magnes. Would that affairs in Palestine would take a turn that would bring him and his policies to the top! He can count upon me as a loyal supporter. At last I see the light. The Balfour Declaration has been like a foreign body in the system of Jewish revival, causing irritation and liable to set up a dangerous poison. I must have recourse once again to Ahad Haam to see



to what extent he thought out clearly his program of Palestine as a cultural and not political center.

* * *

Friday, November 22, 1929

I officiated at Beatrice Liebovitz's wedding last night. At 3:00 I began preparing the talk and it was nearly one when I got back. It was fortunate that I worked out my remarks carefully, or I would have many regrets, because the young couple acted stupidly and showed not the least sign of interest in what I was saying to them. If I had had to formulate my ideas at the time I was speaking I would have been thoroughly disconcerted.

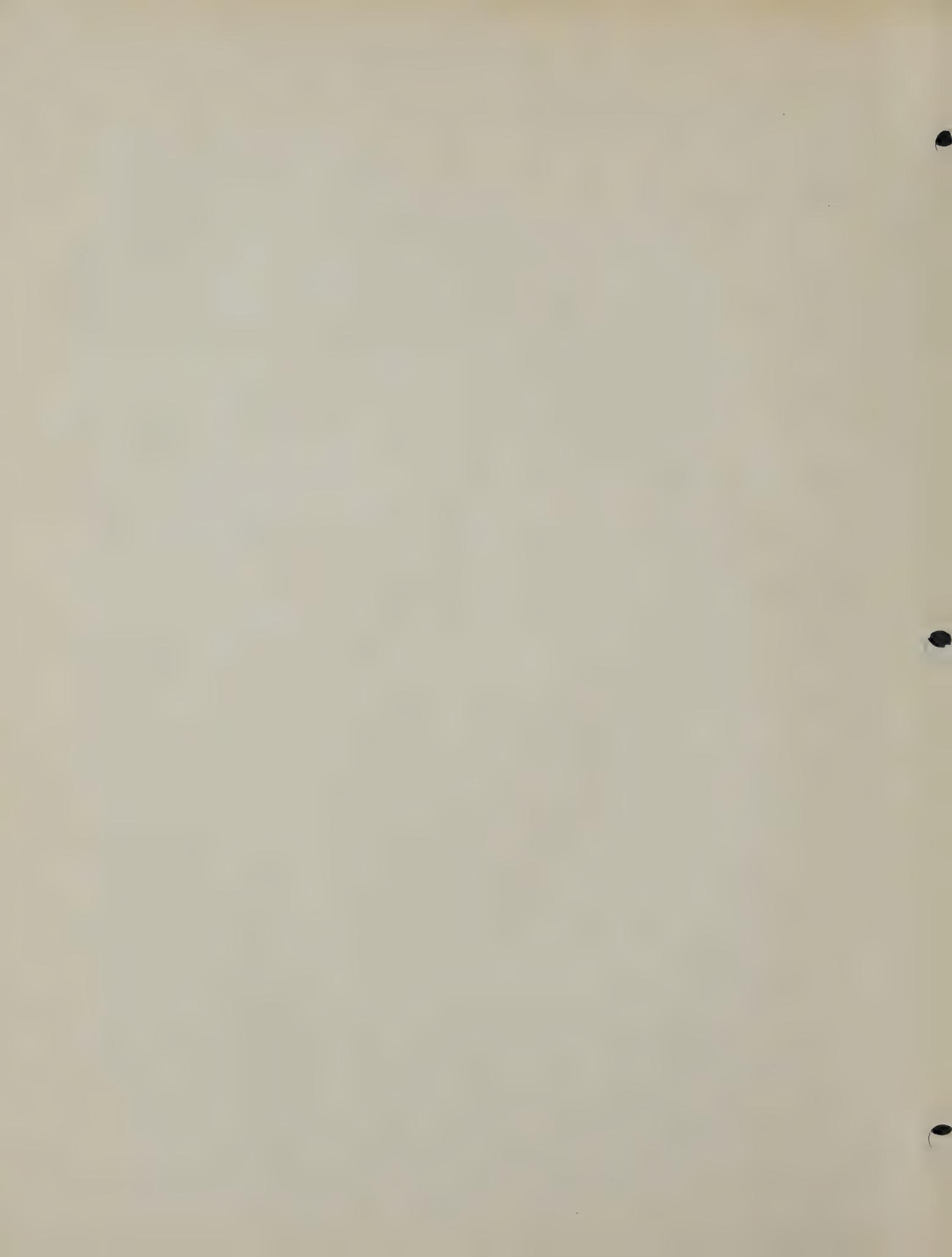
I. D. Morrison in speaking to me about Magnes' action called him an ass. He told me that Warburg had sent a cable to Magnes rebuking him for his dangerous talk.

This morning Dr. Coralink in speaking over the phone to me denounced Magnes and described his statement as a calamity.

Much as I admire Magnes' courage I am compelled to question the wisdom of suggesting at this time a National Assembly in Palestine. In fact it is a question altogether whether it is not too late to make overtures of peace to leaders who make use of massacre (to say nothing of their cynical fabrications of lies about the Wailing Wall) as a means of achieving their political ends. Of course one may say it is never too late for peace.

I am all at sea about the solution of the Jewish problem in general and of the Palestine problem in particular. One has to have first hand information about the mass of intricate details and in addition the clairvoyance of a prophet to form an intelligent instead of an impulsive judgment about what should be the next step.

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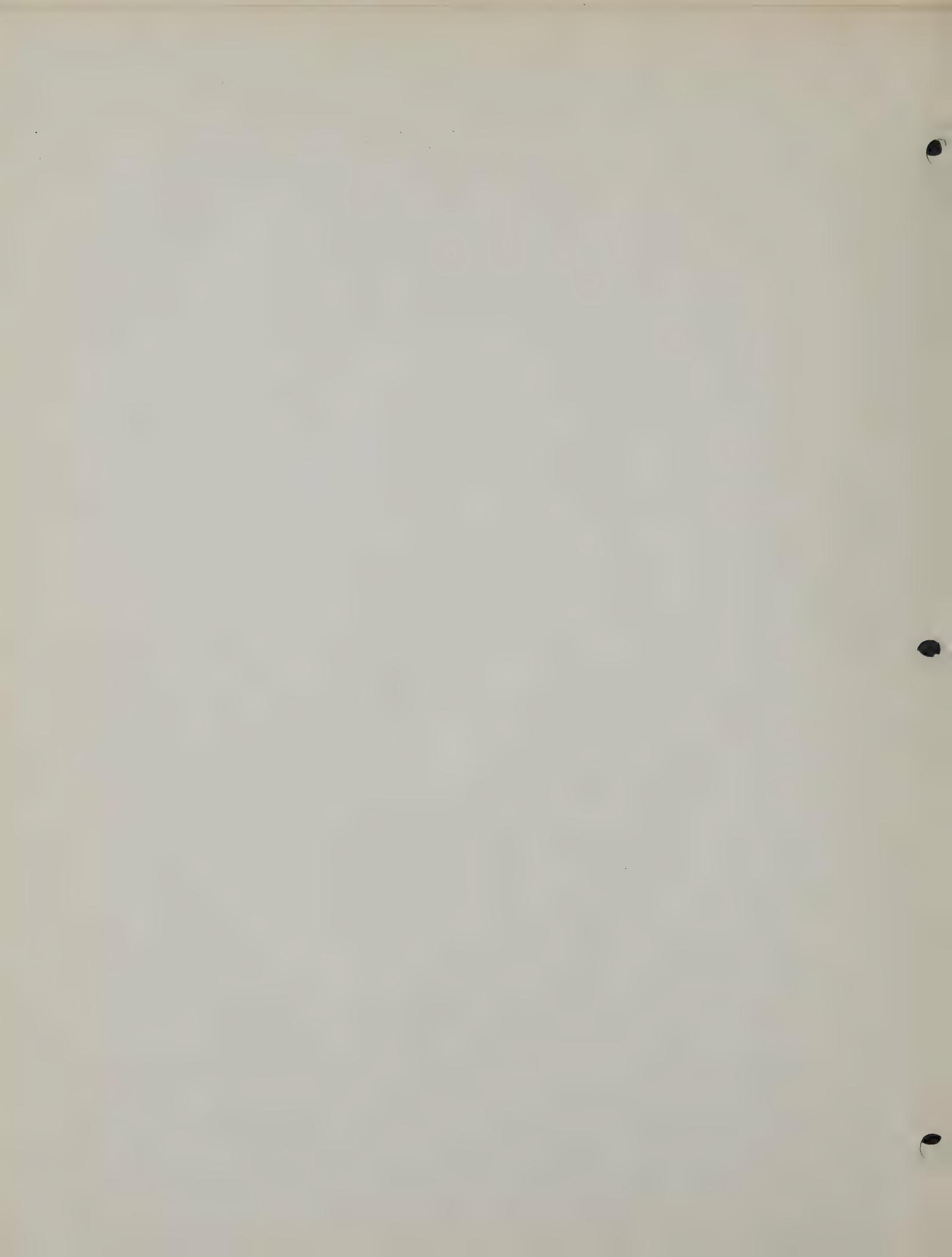
Sunday, November 24, 1929

I see in this morning's Jewish Journal that Magnes denies the interview reported in the Jewish Daily Bulletin in which he is alleged to have favored the abrogation of the Balfour Declaration. I am more mixed up than ever about this Zionist business.

My sermon on Individual Conscience seemed to have drawn a larger attendance than usual. I had the first Bas Mitzvah initiation since February 1928. The girl who, I learned later, is a grand child of the late cantor Jacobson, asked of her own accord to attend Hebrew school and to have her Bas Mitzvah occasion celebrated. Her parents, Dr. & Mrs. Polk, especially the father, had been totally indifferent to Judaism, and it is only through her that they became affiliated with the SAJ.

In the afternoon I called on Dr. Failowitch. He had returned recently from Abyssinia. He dinned into my ears the same story as of ?? months ago, about deficits, his having to give up the work and his desire to get some teaching position in a college or university. The other subject was preaching Jewish religion to the Gentiles. He had spoken to Baeck of Berlin about that plan and asked me how I felt about his proposal. I expressed myself in accord with it and said that I would go next summer to Europe if I knew it would be taken up by a few earnest Jewish leaders.

Incidentally, he mentioned having heard Elias Solomon preach yesterday morning. In that sermon Solomon said the Gentiles who are willing to come to terms with us Jews don't seem to understand that they must give up their missionary work among us. This statement of Solomon's was ridiculed by F. and rightly so. A religion that ceases to missionize is dead.



This afternoon I was in better form with my classes at the T. Institute than last week. I have worked out a series of spiritual values which I shall take up with the Senior group. They are:

1. The universe is so constituted that it plays helpfully in-
to man's needs.

a) Man the center of his world - he possesses worth

2. Man's cardinal sin is playing the god

3. The universal code a) sacredness of human life; b) sacred-
ness of the person negates moral impunity

4. The unity of mankind and the moral significance of
division into nations

5. The ideal type of devotee - Abraham - who lends himself
to God's purpose

6. The ?p.206 type of devotee - Jacob - impatient of
God's purposes and frustrated

7. How man plays with the hand of God (the Joseph story)

8. God the Redeemer (The Exodus)

9. God the Lawgiver (The law code)

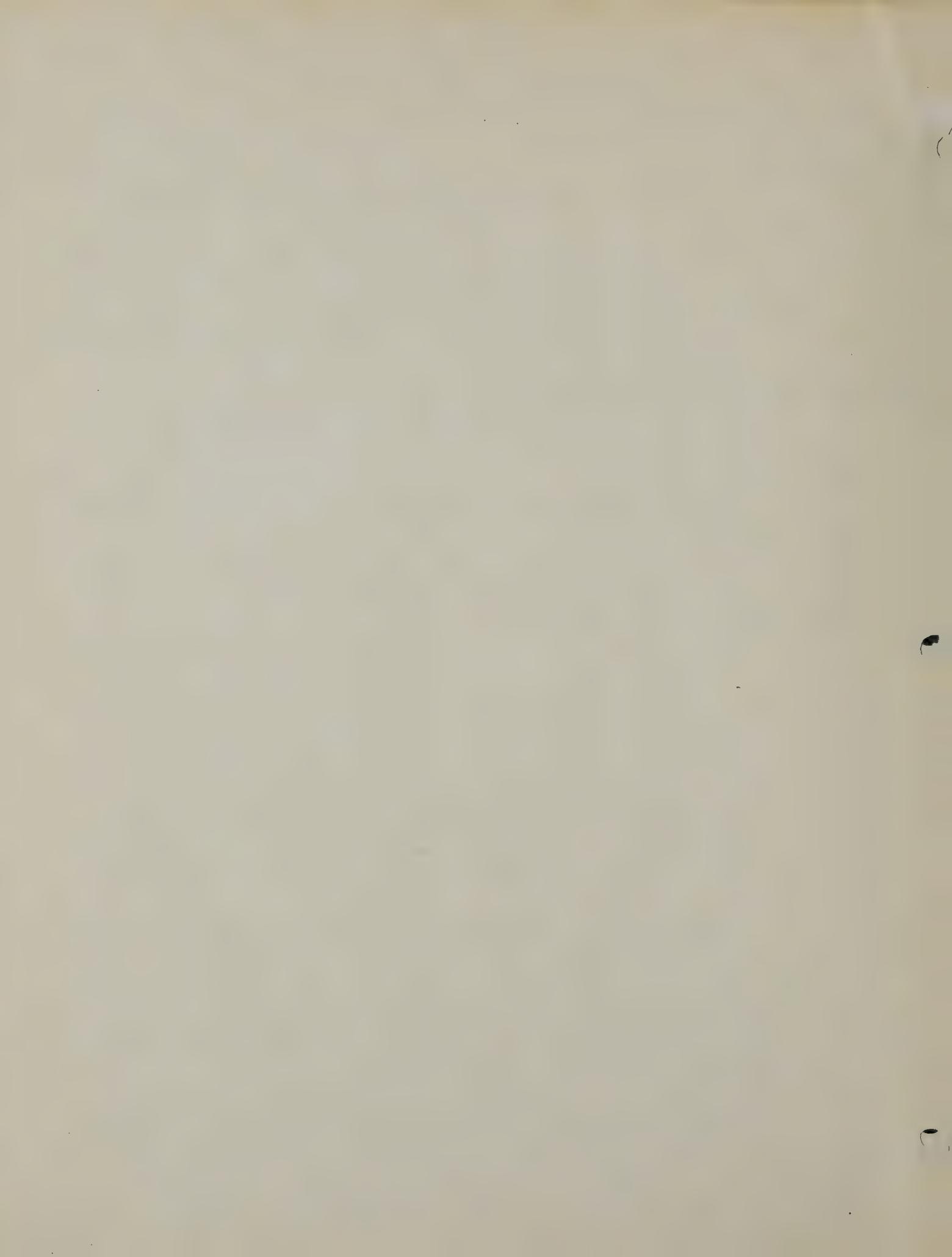
10. God the Upbringer (the trials in the wilderness)

11. The meaning of holiness (Leviticus and Numbers)

12. The meaning of Israel's nationhood (Deuteronomy)

The effort of transforming the static conception of Judaism to the evolutionary one is by no means easy. Miss Braunhut of the Junior class this week and Miss Gordon last week refused to give up what they have been taught to regard as the history of the Jewish religion.

I find that the class ~~xx~~ as a whole, with but few exceptions, hasn't the time sense of Jewish history. Any one of the events might have happened at any time. Without a time sense by which to organize



the Jewish past these students lack all appreciation of the difference between the static and evolutionary conception of Judaism.

Tonight I addressed the opening meeting of the Junior League of the SAJ. There were about 90 young people, mostly outsiders. This is the first time I addressed the Junior League. I urged them to adopt as their purpose "the advancement of Judaism." The only one that reacted with enthusiasm was a young Dr. Rubenstein. The rest were interested in the refreshments that were awaiting them in the next room.

* * *

Tuesday, November 26, 1929

Last Saturday night Robert Gordis called. He is a young man about 29 graduated of the Yeshivah Teachers Institute and has his Ph. D. from Dropsie. He is teaching in the Teachers Training School for Girls under the auspices of the Women's Organization of the Orthodox Union. That school is another competitor of the ~~Yeshivah~~ Teachers Institute. Its raison d'etre is the Orthodox point of view which is supposed to prevail in its courses. Let this teacher is no more Orthodox than I am. He came to ask me to have him in mind in case there was an opening at the Teachers Institute. He therefore made no secret of his unorthodox views about the Bible, though in practice he claimed he was entirely Orthodox. When I tried to point out to him that for the school to engage him as a teacher was an anomaly he tried quite eloquently to make out a case for the right of the Orthodox to permit a large variety of views ranging from those held by Jung and Goldstein to those held by himself. He pointed to the Seminary as equally vague about its views though it claims to stand for traditional Judaism.

I doubt whether a man who does not admit that the evolutionary conception of the Jewish religion gives one a radically different attitude toward everything Jewish from that which is bound to be held by one who subscribes to the traditional conception is fit to be a teacher in

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in a training school for teachers. A man of that type is either muddle-headed or a cynic.

Mrs. Brodie called yesterday morning for the purpose of finding out where her two daughters, 16 and 17, might continue their Hebrew education. She returned ~~recently~~ from Jerusalem where she had spent 18 months with her five children. If the spirit of determination which she spoke of actually exists among the Jews of Palestine then there is hope that Jewish life will ultimately take root there despite the tremendous odds. The heroism displayed by the Jews and the efficiency of the Haganah are to me not only a guarantee of ultimate ~~success~~ establishment of a Jewish Homeland, but also a demonstration of the working of the divine destiny in the history of our people. Incidentally I want to note that the gathering which took place in Washington last Sunday and at which Brandeis spoke out openly as willing to take a leading part in the reconstruction of Palestine is to me another indication that the fate of the Jewish people cannot be appraised in terms of the ordinary historical forces that operate in the life of nations.

According to Mrs. Brodie the greatest contribution to Jewish education in Palestine is being made by Miss Kallen. Why should a Miss Kallen have devoted herself at the greatest possible sacrifice of her health and peace of mind to working out a modern system of education in Palestine? Why should the Brodies look forward to settling in Palestine? These and thousands others like them are being led or driven by that mysterious will, a people's will to life, stronger and more insistent than that possessed by any other people.

But would to God that this same unrelenting will were illumined by an intelligence commensurate with its drive. A more muddle-headed people there can scarcely be found in all the world. We haven't the power to think out any idea to its consequences and implications.

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Shouldn't we have insisted from the very start that an instrument like the Balfour Declaration should be definite and lucid? Talk about not looking a gift horse in the mouth. The Declaration isn't even a horse; it is a hypogriffe or a centaur. Why haven't we ever sat down to puzzle out the question "How is it possible for the Jews ever to constitute a ~~majority~~ majority in Palestine? And not having a majority how can we have a national homeland in Palestine? Why have we never asked ~~them~~, or why asking ~~them~~ have we dismissed all too easily the question "Is it possible for the Arabs also to have a homeland in Palestine?" These and similar questions were regarded as too intricate and therefore to be avoided. Likewise the question of religion to state, etc. etc. Of course we were afraid that to discuss these questions would destroy our capacity for action. That is exactly what I mean when I say that ~~ass~~civilized peoples go our collective intelligence is of a very low order.

Here is now friend Magnes whom I could never credit with the ability to think out the plan that he proposes in the statement which appeared in today's Jewish Bulletin. He is and always has been even more muddleheaded than the other outstanding personalities in Jewish life. How does he come to so logical a plan as that suggested by him. The answer is Philby. All he does is merely to adopt Philby's carefully thought out proposition.

But while I agree that such a plan is the only feasible one I cannot make up my mind whether Magnes should have come out with it at the present juncture. His statement has already precipitated a lot of aimless discussion and we shall be overwhelmed by a tidal wave of words, when the all important thing now is to plan quietly and act quickly. Why in the world didn't he speak up at the last Congress and at the Agency meeting? It is alright for Philby to talk now but I am afraid that Magnes' Amen will stop our ears to reason. p.v.9

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There are a good many passages in the writings of the Anonymous Prophet that will come to plague us - Cf. Is. 60, 12, 16 and plenty others in a similar and often in a vengeful strain.

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How does the Jewish will to live function in me? I do not yearn to live in Palestine. I detest oriental life and manners. The ignorance and fanaticism that thrive so luxuriantly under oriental skies are as hateful to me as the hot breath of the hamsin. Before the days of monoxide infested streets I used to love New York as I shall never love the Emek. A soil that is soaked with so much human blood will need long centuries of expiation by peace and security to atone for the cruel deeds that have been committed there.

How then does my Jewishness express itself? In a desire to move mentally in the fields of Hebrew literature both ancient and modern. That is a matter of will is attested by the fact that the large tracts of desert in which these fields abound do not daunt me. A little snatch of English verse is as gloriously fertile as an English landscape, but I have the feeling that it is not mine or my people's spiritual territory. It is otherwise when I read a piece of Talmud, Midrash, medieval poetry or philosophy. Much of it is arid, barren, even ugly, but it is my cultural home, and this feeling of at homeness is more to me than the actual worth of the ideas or the beauty of their expression. I am utterly miserable when a long period of time elapses without my having an opportunity to read Jewish text, and I am equally miserable when I do read it, because of the awful solitude in which I find myself. I feel like one who comes back to his home town and finds it completely deserted. (What I say here is a more correct analysis of my text complex than the one I give on 195-196).

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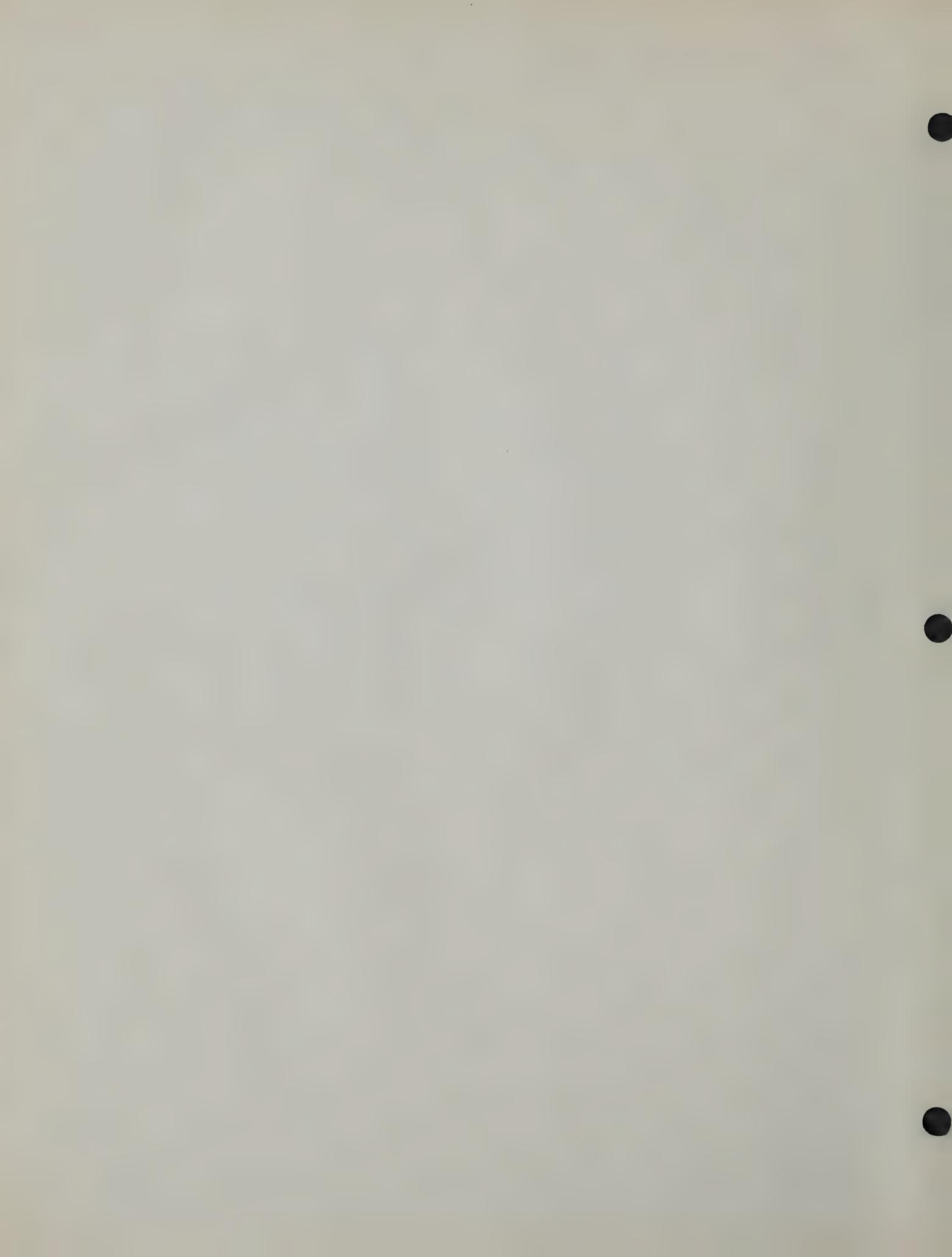
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Thursday, November 28, 1929

My The experience which the seminary students acquire in public speaking when they preach on the High Holidays or when they take what are known as "weekend positions" is of questionable value in itself and is more than counterbalanced by the harm they do in corrupting the taste of their audiences.. The practice of sending out raw youths to foist their spiritual crudities upon the general community indicates the cynical attitude of the institutions that are supposed to train these men for spiritual leadership. It is inconceivable that a medical school would permit its students to practice in communities where there are no physicians. If preaching were taken seriously by the preachers and by the institutions that train them, it would be considered as a method of dealing with social and religious ills, as demanding a knowledge of social and religious diagnosis and therapy. The practical problem of supplying communities which cannot afford to engage a preacher permanently with some religious inspiration could be met by having the students deliver sermons of a general nature which would be furnished them by the Seminary, and which would be known as such by the audiences. Those sermons should be read from manuscript and not delivered by heart. It is not difficult to teach the students to read such sermons effectively.

It would be far more beneficial for the students themselves to earn what they need for their expenses by having them tutor in private families and read and discuss with adult members of families Bible, Jewish history or Hebrew literature. This kind of work would require more careful preparation on the part of the students and would compel them to become more intimately acquainted with the actual difficulties that have to be overcome in making Judaism intelligible, interesting and appealing. Such tutoring would, of course, have to be supervised, as in fact all the outside work done by the students, otherwise they are only too apt to teach the wrong things or the right things



in the wrong way.

In a review of John Haynes Holmes' recent book on Palestine, H. S. Fosdick ridicules Holmes' ~~xxxxxx~~ presupposition that the Jews have a basic right to Palestine. Quoting Holmes as saying that the Arabs "are but guardians of the home from which the rightful owner has for a time, through no fault of his own, been absent," Fosdic adds "Exactly the same principle would obviously give New York City to the Indians."

This comment of Fosdick's which I read ^{yesterday} in the December number of The World Tomorrow has upset my equilibrium. Here is another example of our national stupidity. Should we not in all the years in which we have been agitating for Palestine have issued an authoritative work establishing our historic claim to Palestine from the point of view of law and morality? There is no question in my mind that the most certain fact about our relationship to Palestine is that we are entitled to the right of buying out the land. ^{but} Having been away so long from it, and its being in the possession of those who did not themselves take it by force, preclude our being its rightful owners, but do not preclude our having the right to redeem it at a reasonable cost. That right is based upon the fact that protesting our claim to Palestine has been with us a national and religious obsession for the last two thousand years.

The fact that I haven't the energy to take Fosdick to task for his unwarranted comment is not calculated to add to my self-satisfaction. I wish some one would point out to him that if N.Y. City had not been bought but taken from the Indians by force, if the descendants of those Indians had kept united and had organized their life with the one hope in mind of getting back the land that had been taken from them, had kept on announcing to all the world that the land was theirs and



that they never meant to surrender, and there would then have arrived a time when they would outstrip the New Yorkers in culture and civilization and would be willing and able to redeem the city and bring civilization to it. "Exactly that same principle would give New York City to the Indians."

The Talmud is an excellent thesaurus of instances proving that time is as likely to bring about deterioration as well as progress in ideas. Take, e.g., the following in Berakot 17a:

The bitter invective of the prophet p.212
is insanely adduced by the Rabbis as proof that

The beautiful prayer by
is distorted by the Tosopists to mean

On that same page even Rashi manages to take all the spiritual beauty out of a prayer that the students of Yammia were in the habit of reciting.

On the other hand I rather like the naivete of the Rabbis as shown in their application of
Even nowadays with our elevator apartments the last named item comes under the category of for many a temper is ruffled when in the morning there is but one bathroom and the whole family wants to make use of it at the same time.

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Friday, November 29, 1929

This morning Mrs. Kahn called. She looks like a woman of about 35-38. She is a sister of Adlerbloom who years ago was a student of the Seminary but who dropped the course in the last year because he didn't want to go into the ministry. I learned from Mrs. Kahn that it

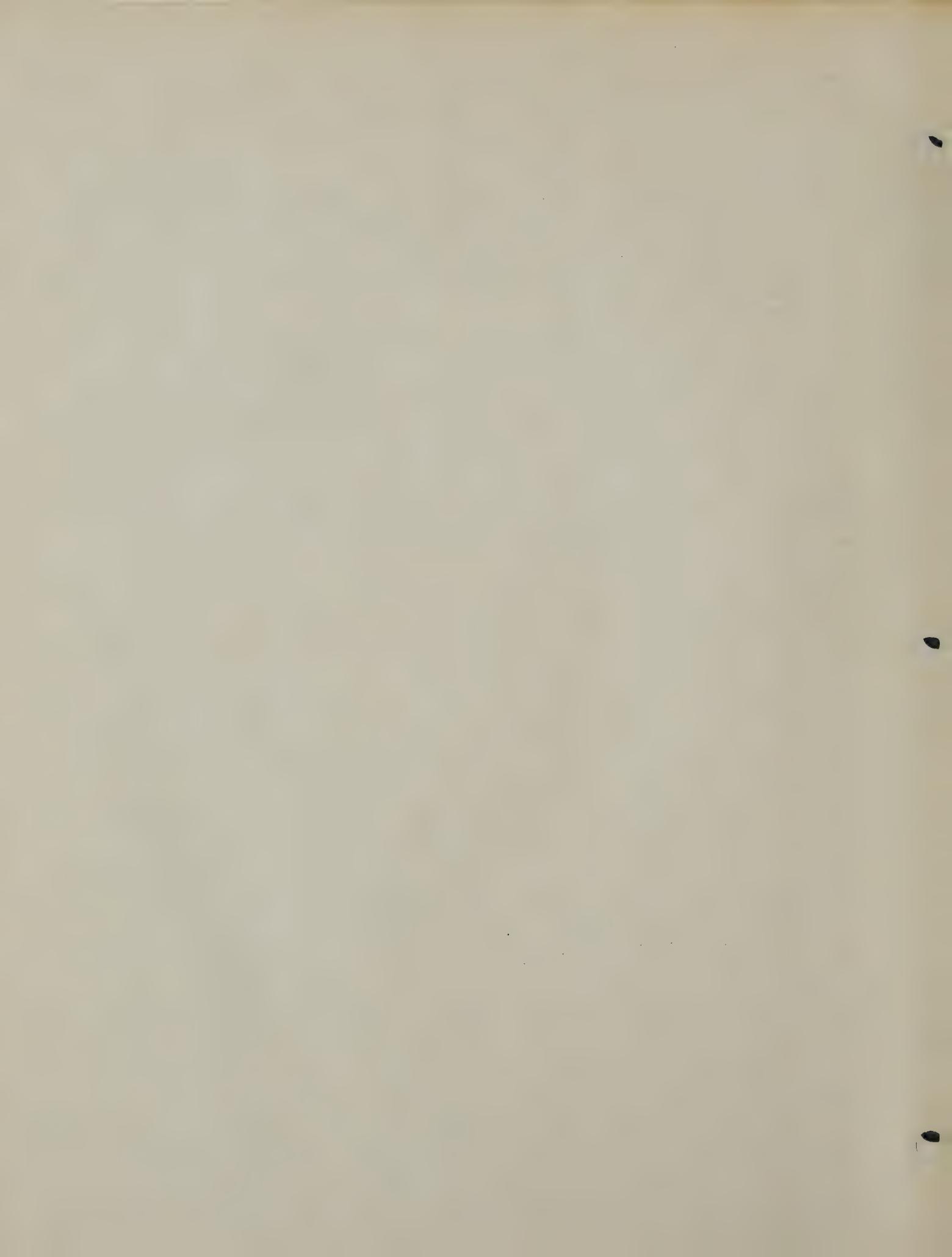


due to influence brought to bear upon him by his own relatives and by Nima who was then engaged to him that he gave up the idea of the rabbinate as his calling, and took up actuarial work. Nima is a daughter of Rabbi Hirschenson. Her attachment to Judaism is essentially nationalistic. According to Mrs. Kahn there is very little of Jewish atmosphere in the Adelbloom home and their child's upbringing has but little of Jewishness in it.

This was the first time I met Mrs. Kahn. Evelyn Garfield told me about her along time ago and it was at Evelyn's suggestion that Mrs. Kahn came to see me. She admitted that she had failed to give her two children who are now 13 and 15 respectively a Jewish religious training. But having taken courses in Teachers College in parental education she began to realize that she had made a serious mistake which she wants now to correct. That is not, however, what she came to see me about. She wants to engage in parental work among Jews and she evidently finds that there would be no point to work with Jewish parents in which there was no account taken of their place in society as Jews. Such orientation she realizes calls for an understanding of the Jewish past and a theory as to the Jewish future.

When I learned how thoroughly immersed she is in her studies on parental education and how keenly she feels the need of a proper orientation in Judaism I gave ~~her~~ the booklet on the Reconstruction of Judaism and the two volumes of the collected articles which are to form the material of the prospected book on Judaism as a Civilization and promised to arrange conferences with her to help her plan courses in parental education in which Jewish adjustment would form an integral part.

An interesting example of the way I manage to preach only
what I believe in with all my heart and yet have something to say that

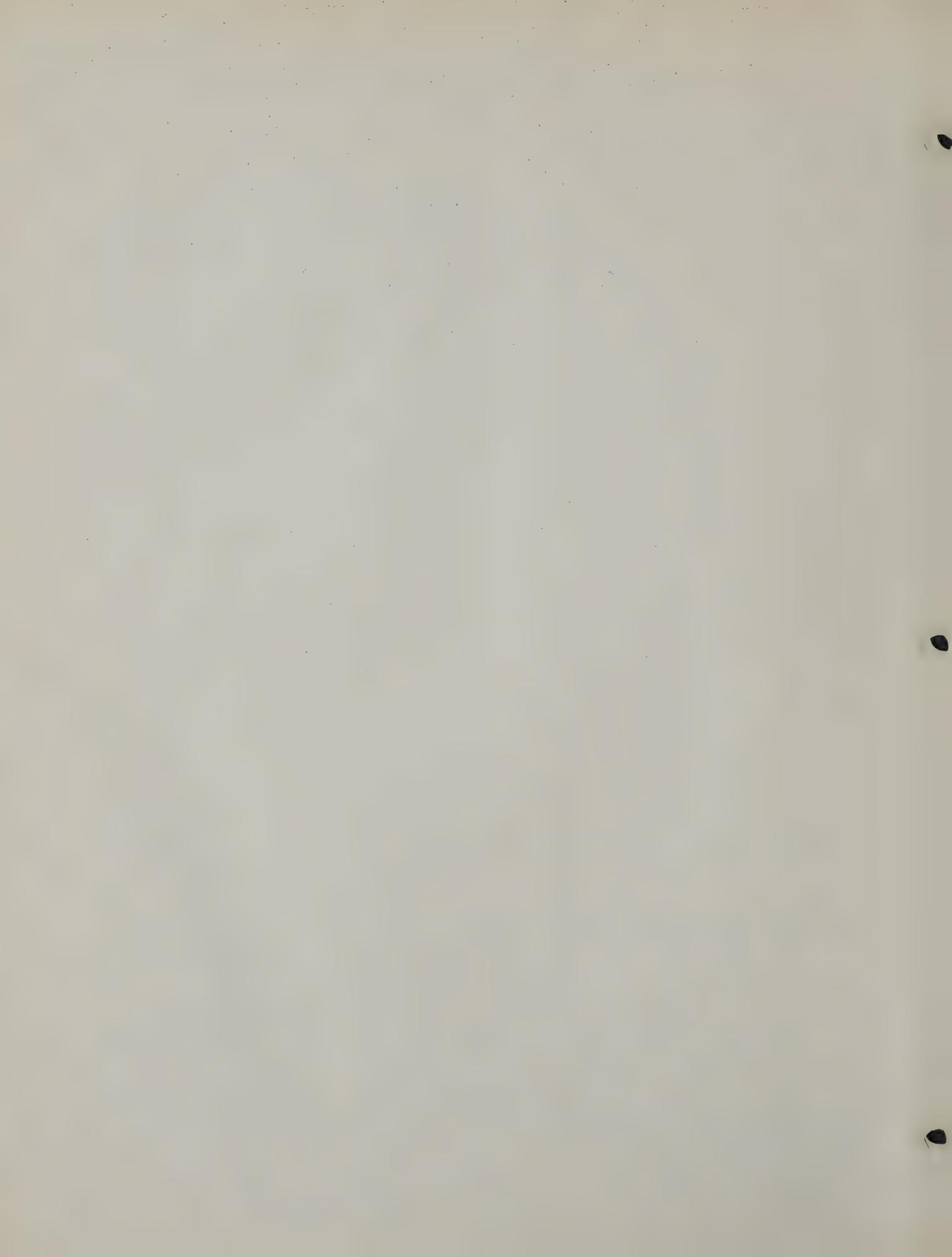


is entirely acceptable is what I did with the sermon which I worked out for tomorrow. I happened to come across a book on Fear written by a religious psychiatrist. The author tries to prove that practicing the presence of God is effective as a protection against fear. He urges the reading of the New Testament ^{IMITATIO} Inutatio Dei and similar literature. It appears that he is a Catholic trying to win his reader for ^{the} Christian religion as a means to peace of mind. Having promised to base my sermon upon the book I was at a loss at first what conclusion to draw from it. I could not get myself to urge the reading of religious literature merely as a means of counter-suggestion against fear. There was not enough truth in that fact for me. Upon further reflection, however, I drew the following inference from it: Since the main function of religion is to cast out our fears, then the criteria whether a religion is alive or not is its efficacy in discharging that function. Insofar as Jewish religion fails to do that at present it is our business to bring it up to that point. Incidentally I thought of other ideas concerning religion, e.g., in relation to ethics, which are both true, interesting and in need of being pointed out. All in all I do not regret having had to organize the sermon on Fear. It has helped me clarify my own ideas on the subject. May the time come when I shall be able to add p.213. *Psalm 34:5*

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Saturday night, November 30, 1929

God is that element in the universe which makes it safe for life, intelligence and good will. This is the conception of God which I formulated in the sermon on Fear. Would to God that I could put into practice all that I preached today. It seems as though I am in the psychiatrist in that book "Fear." I can help others without being able to help myself.

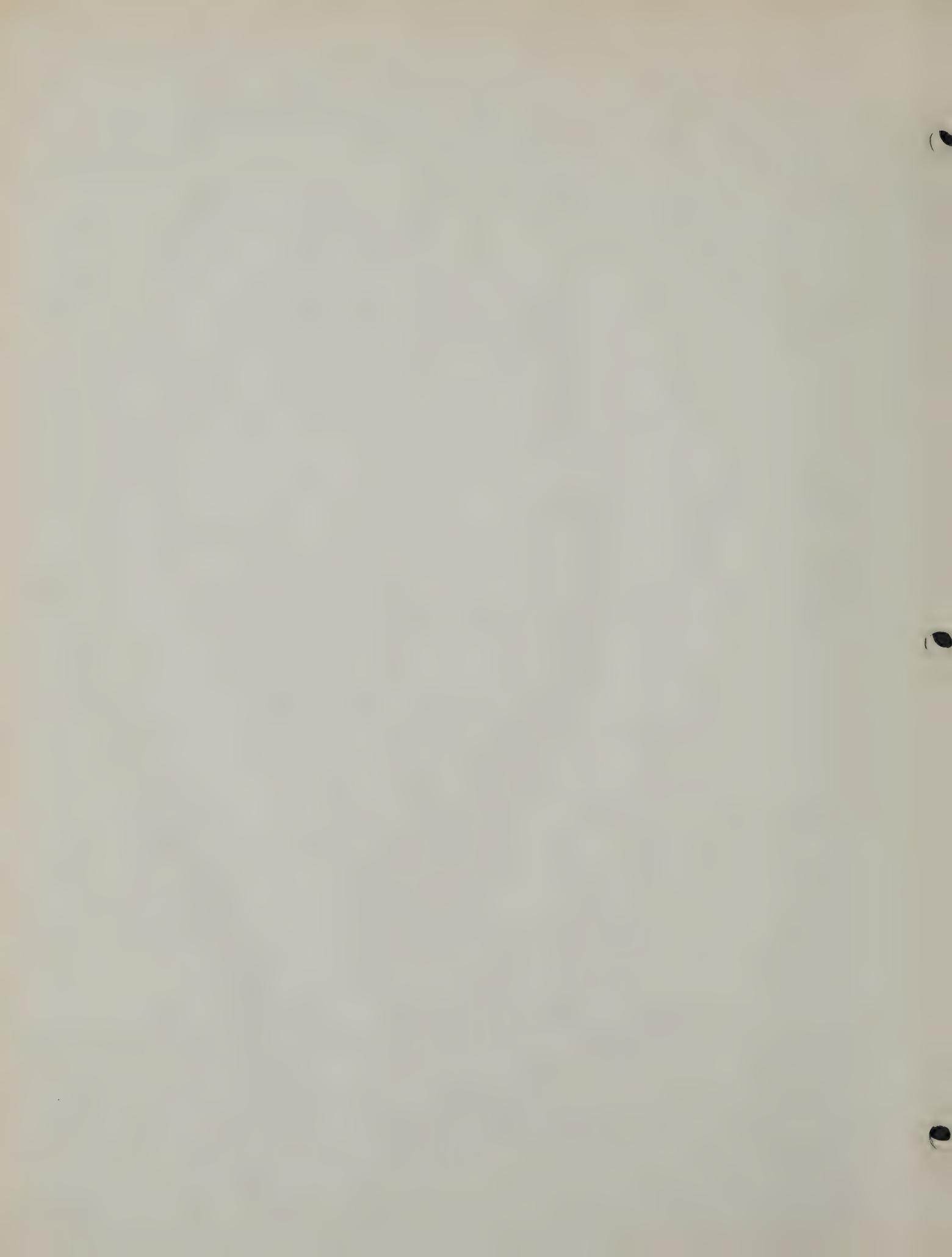


I had Dr. Faitlowitch for dinner today. Although I am bored when he begins to speak to me about his difficulties in getting money to carry on his activities with the Falashan I love to hear talk about our duty as Jews to do missionary work. When he mentioned the subject at the table neither Lena nor Judith could see the point. Judith seemed to think he was either a fanatic or a lunatic. I on the other hand feel like one who is numb with cold and who is anxious to warm himself at the first fire he comes across. One seldom meets a person in Jewish life in whom there burns the fire of religion. The rabbis and other professional teachers of religions are like paintings of coals aflame. This Faitlowitch actually feels the reality of God. Anyone who feels that way seems to me to possess a beautiful soul which not even the ugliest face can obscure. In fact the very ugliness of Faitlowitch's face compels me to think of his soul only. But so prosaically babittian, so narrowly slavish to the conventional good looks do even my own Lena and Judith do not seem to have not the slightest appreciation for a man like Faitlowitch who in his way has displayed as much heroism and endurance as some of the Jesuit missionaries who came to this country to convert the Indians to Christianity. Is this insistence upon fair looks the product of the modern education which tries to transmit the Greek ideal of beauty? Then Judith has hardly caught the true spirit of Hellenism at its best. Plato and Alcibiades who were prepossessing and who had been imbued all their lives with the ideal of beauty disregarded the ugliness in Socrates' face and could see nothing but the beauty of his soul. To me one of the most spiritual facts about Jewish life in the past is this very trait of setting a high value on the inward beauty of the spirit, a trait that has often been lampooned in the following: Many a Jew whose eyes were rheumy, whose nose was bulbous, who had a couple of warts on his cheeks would be described by those who knew him as "a schöner yid."



If among the values by which these people live today had a poetry of their own I wouldn't mind their failing to appreciate the poetic beauty of the spiritual and religious values of the Jewish past. I cannot see that by eliminating the practice of not turning on the lights on the Sabbath, and the bewitching hour of gleaming before Habdallah my children have found a substitute for that poetic mysticism which that hour would afford to any one with the slightest sensitivity for the inner music of the soul. If I had insisted upon the strict observance of the traditional Sabbath I would have made hypocrites of my children. They certainly would have failed to see anything poetic in the effects of a traditional Sabbath, and they would have made ~~me~~ me miserable with the rebellion which it would have evoked from them.

Of course it is not my children alone who suffer from the cause of intellectual dryrot which is only another form of Philishnism. It is the trouble with all of our so called Jewish intellectuals. I had that fact brought home to me by what a woman by the name of Greenhill said to me this afternoon. She had been attending the services at the SAJ House of late. I had received a letter from her which I preferred answering by seeing her personally. In the course of the conversation she referred to a Menorah dinner which she and her husband had attended recently. The discussion at the dinner turned upon the question of Jewish education. She had gone there in the hope of getting inspiration and guidance in coping with the problem of her child. Instead ~~mixxx~~ she heard a lot of talk by highbrow people who made a point of emphasizing their superiority to the problem or their ignorance of its solution. That was an opportunity of a kind that the Ivriah would never get in a thousand years, an opportunity to impress upon a group of worthwhile families the value of Jewish education and it was squandered with all the ruthlessness of that intellectual vandalism which is characteristic of our Jewish smart alecks.



It occurs to me that in the definition of God (p.213) I omitted an important category, "Beauty". Life, intelligence, good-will and beauty. I am glad I thought of a fourth category or some Christian Abbaalist would have charged me with being at heart a trinitarian, identifying life with God the father, good-will with God the son and intelligence with God the holy ghost. In a way this reinterpretation of the doctrine trinity is not altogether far-fetched, but it exposes the weakness of the doctrine. It shows that the trinitarian conception of reality omits the element of beauty. My version of the one and the many would Quaternity rather than Trinity.

I must qualify my opinion of Judith's reaction to my having assented at the dinner table to Faitlowitch's missionary zeal. When she came back a little while ago from the theatre I dropped a remark which led to our discussing again the question of missionary effort. I said that in the first place that the missionary effort I approved of would have to be confined to the individual, personal or universal religion and would have to exclude what I always speak of as folk religion. And I added that if I were sure as to what that universal religion should consist of I would certainly try to make propaganda for it. The only thing that stops me is the vagueness of that universal religion in my own mind. Judith replied that that would not be Jewish religion. My answer was that the impetus to propagate what I believe to be universal religious truth is derived from the background of Jewish history.

This led up to the old question as to Jewish proclivity to proselytism. She has been taught that the Jews were opposed to proselytism. That is why she couldn't understand why I suddenly came to approve of it. Again the sin of misrepresentation of historic fact! This fiction about Jews being opposed to proselytism has been worked



up by ill informed apologists for Judaism and is being taught as absolute fact. This fiction is now acting like a boomerang in giving our young people a distorted notion of the past and a wrong attitude toward religion in general. p.216

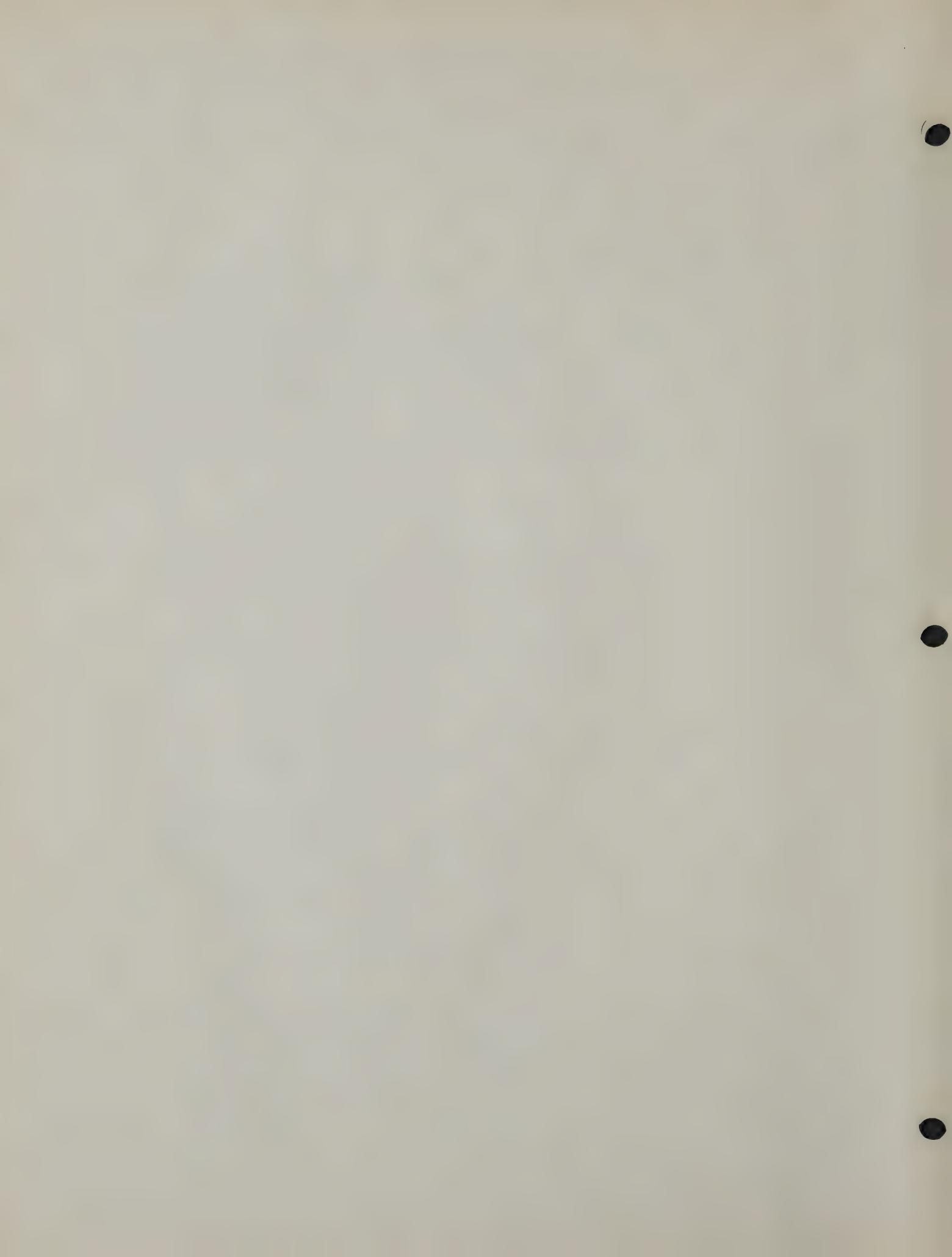
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Monday, December 2, 1929

The strain of having to officiate at the Rosenblatt wedding yesterday noon together probably with my having eaten something I shouldn't gave me a severe headache which I am only now (at 8:00 P.M.) beginning to get rid of. Nevertheless I managed to attend to my routine duties except that I taught one period less yesterday afternoon.

The honor group of TI students met at my house a second time last night. One of the students gave a report on S. R. Hirsch's Nineteen Letters. In the discussion which followed it became evident that he started out with a premise which the modern minded Jew found it difficult to accept. In my remarks I brought out the point that we must necessarily base our reasoning upon some premise which we accept as ultimate. The difference between various cultural periods or groups is generally a difference in the type of premise which is accepted as basis. For the modern Jew the premise that the Torah is divinely revealed and an eternal code of law is no longer tenable. The critical study of the Bible has taught us to go behind that premise.

The question then resolved itself as to what shall constitute for us the basic premise or premises upon which we might construct a program of Jewish life and thought. We agreed that we shall premise two assumptions 1) the desirability of our maintaining and developing Jewish life, and 2) the desirability of having Jewish life in the future continuous with Jewish life in the past. With these two assumptions our problem is What shall be the nature of the Jewish life we wish to foster?



Tuesday, December 3, 1929

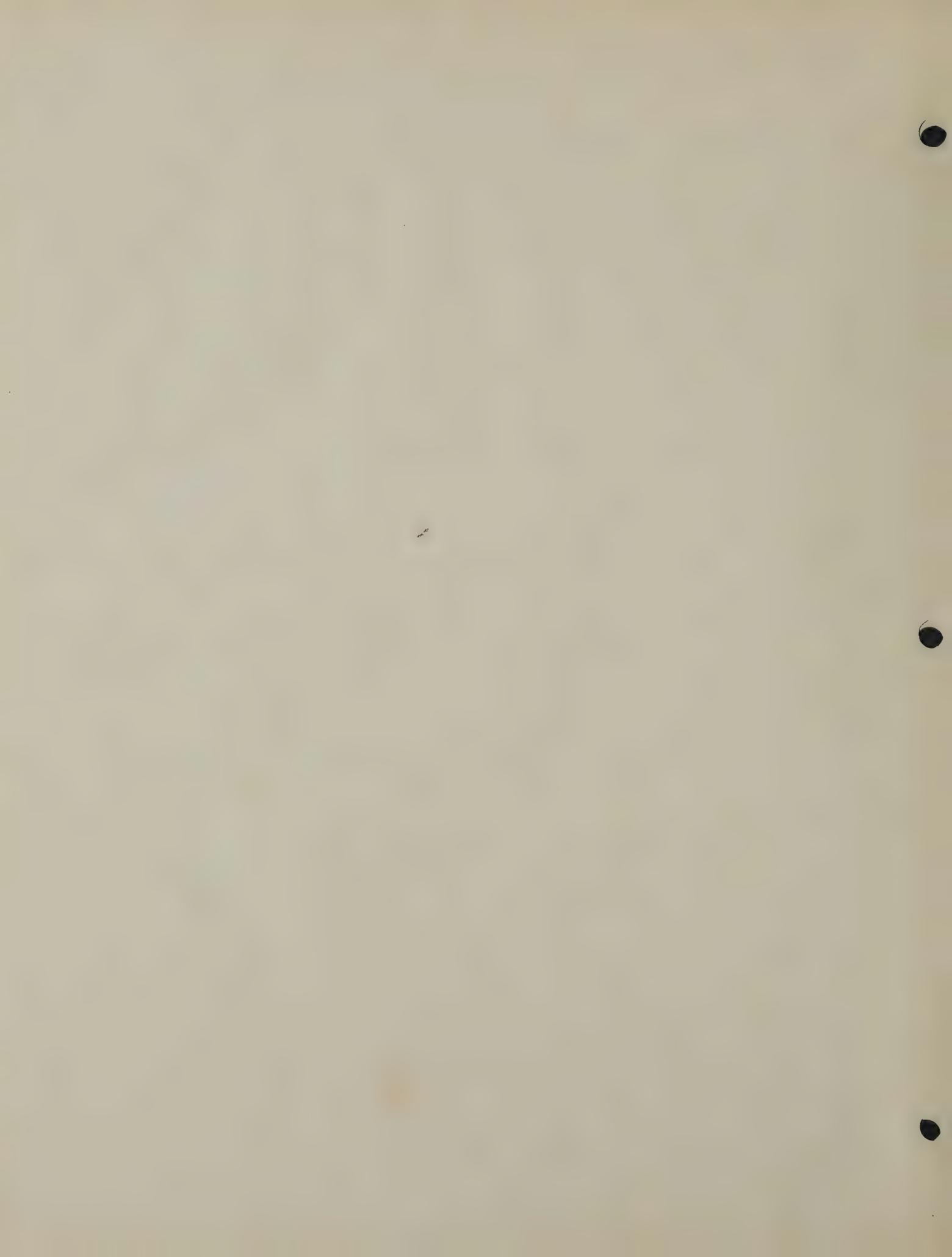
Yesterday morning at 11 the following met at my house: Samuel Cohen, Jacob Kohn, Schoolman, Dinin, Chipkin. The purpose of the meeting was to find ways of securing the funds necessary to organize the congregational schools of the West Side into a unified system which would be supervised by one person under the auspices of the United Synagogue. The discussion resolved itself to the question of the proper person and the salary he would have to receive. The least that any one qualified could be expected to take the position for is \$5000. From the standpoint of results he might achieve this sounds like an enormous salary especially for a young man who would be likely to have been but a few years in educational work. As compared with salaries paid in the public school system \$5000 is an exorbitant sum. Yet considering the insecurity of the position, the difficulty of producing results and the tremendous waste of energy how could any one work for less.

The fact that the demand for Jewish life and education is at a low ebb is chiefly responsible for the high cost of Jewish activity and the high cost of Jewish activity will naturally cause the demand to die out entirely. This is the vicious circle in which Jewish activity moves.

Last night I saw the play "Suss" at the Yiddish Art Theatre. The courage and idealism of Maurice Schwartz is going on with his efforts in the face of the most heartbreaking odds are to me far more remarkable than the bravery and ability of Byrd who is now captain of both Poles. The audience consisted of members of Signers congregation who attended the play as a benefit performance. After the play Schwartz appealed to them to patronize the effort of the Jewish Art Theater to present Jewish themes with all the passion and devotion which only Jewish artists are capable of.

Another forlorn hope.

This was one of the days when I felt lonely, dispirited and



indifferent to life's ills and goods.

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Wednesday, December 4, 1929

The man who was just here was Rabbi Kasher, the author of the p. 218 ~~of~~ encyclopedia collection of the rabbinic interpretation of the Torah. Thanks to his father's and father's-in-law financial ability to support him R. Kasher devoted the last fifteen years to the collection, sifting and arranging of the material on the average of sixteen hours a day. Now that he has the material he is at his wits' end how to get it published. The amount needed is about \$50,000. So far very few have promised to contribute anything toward that amount. He came to ask me to use my influence with some of my friends especially with Sam Lampert. All the time that he was talking with me I thought he referred to Sol Lampert, who, after all, has sure knowledge of Hebrew and ought to appreciate the importance of such a work. When he realized that I had Sol Lampert in mind he told me that he had sent the first volume to Sol Lampert who instead of paying for it, returned it by post.

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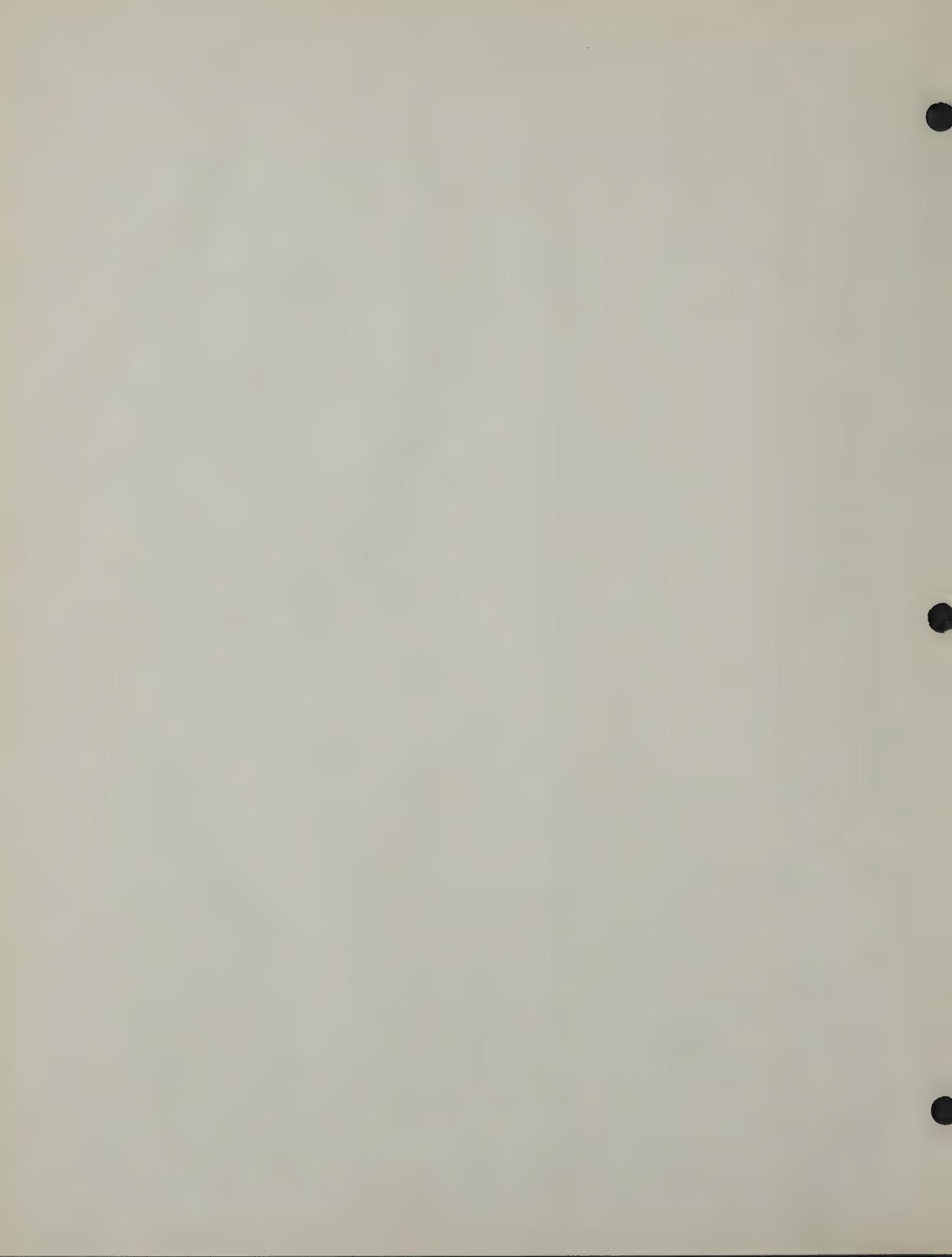
Thursday, December 5, 1929

The following prayer from "The Temple" by W. E. Orchard fits my present mood:

"O God, Life Eternal, my days are speeding fast away. The things I meant to do are still undone. What I meant to be I feel I never shall be. O leave me not. Sometimes I fear that life itself is dying down within me. Learning no longer comes easy to me. Change makes me afraid. Enthusiasm fades. Resolve proves impotent.

"O take not Thy holy spirit from me.

"I have so carefully husbanded my resources, yet they have steadily declined. What I kept I lost, only what I gave remained my



own, and that is oh so small. I have sheltered my soul from the chill of criticism and daily have grown weaker. I have excused myself from arduous tasks only to lose my rest. I have shrunk from pain only to find the fear of life invade and terrify my heart.

"O cast me not away from Thy presence."

Just before I got up this morning I dreamt that I suddenly departed for Palestine and coming to Jerusalem I found that another Arab pogrom was going on. An Arab tried to stab me but I escaped. As I passed through the University halls I felt that the Jews were organized for defense but were poorly armed. I lived through all the tension and fear of an actual Arab attack.

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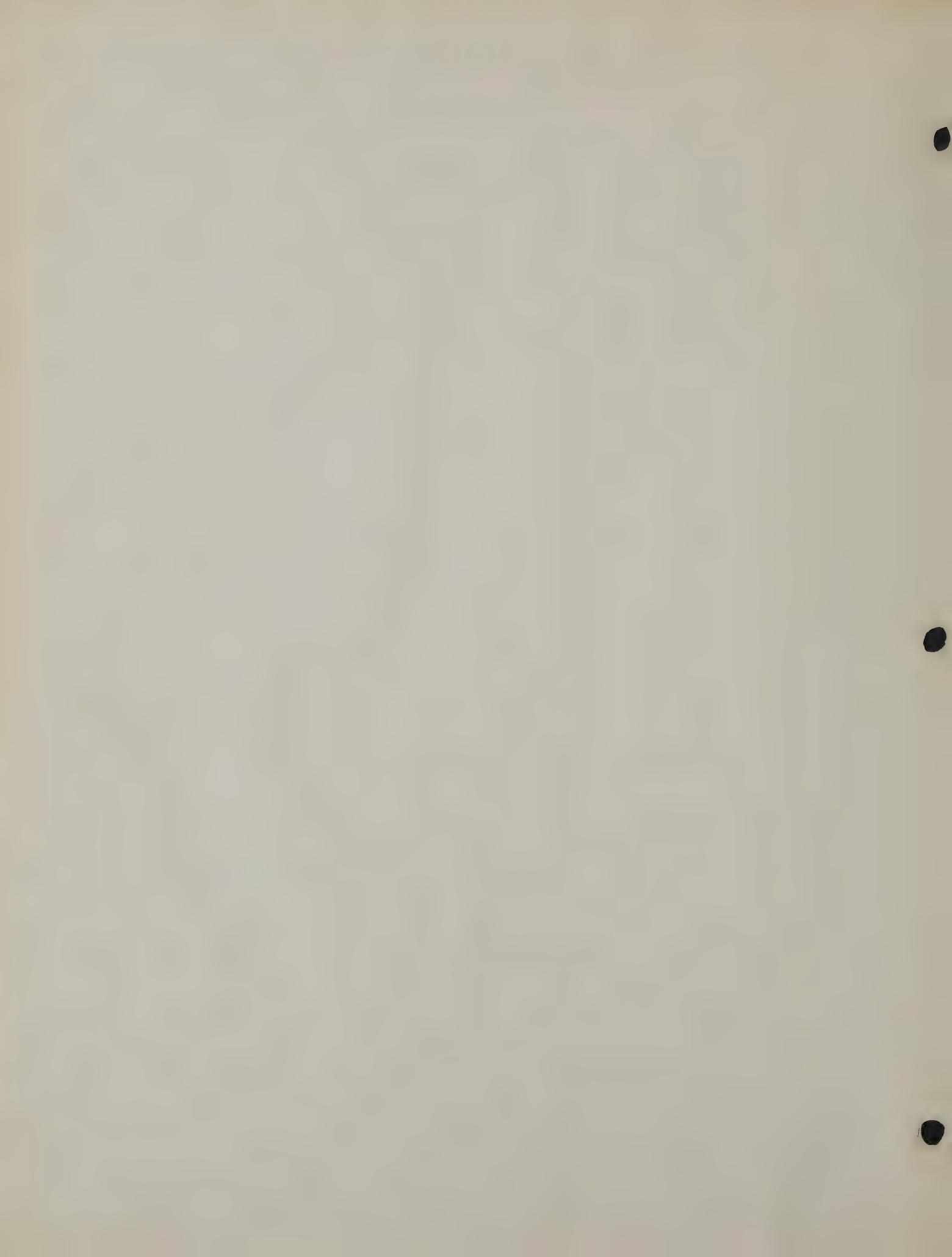
When Rabbi Kasher was about to come I felt that it would be inappropriate for me to receive him with uncovered head since I was sure he would be wearing a skull cap. But this was something more than a sense of impropriety in the feeling I had about the matter. Rabbi Kasher somehow impressed me as a man deserving of high respect because of a certain spiritual light that seemed to shine in his face. Whether my reaction was natural or atavistic I experienced an inward desire to express my regard for the man by wearing a cap.

This experience led me to conclude that I ought not to sit with uncovered head at any time if I wanted to sense the holiness of life or the presence of God. Logically it seems ridiculous to connect the wearing of a skull cap with a sense of God's presence, but psychologically that connection can be accounted for. The sense of God's presence requires as a prerequisite some outward action that on the one hand serves no ~~useless~~ utilitarian purpose and on the other is a fitting symbol of humility.



When I advocated the transformation of the synagogue into a center I failed to reckon with an insuperable obstacle that I now realize stands in the way. The transformation which I urged and which I still regard as indispensable if the synagogue is to have a future was ~~to~~ brought about by a synthesis of religion with the leisure life of the Jew. It never occurred to me that the kind of leisure life which the Jew cares for is incompatible with religion. I had always thought of leisure being spent in physical and cultural activities of a recreative character. But now when I see one elaborate synagogue center after another remaining unused except by beneficiaries who can pay but part of its upkeep and most of the time even not by people of that type, I have been wondering why those who have established these expensive centers belong to clubs outside of the synagogue. It finally dawned on me that the main reason these synagogue Jews go anywhere except to their own centers for amusement is that only thing that amuses them is card playing and gambling. Even if they would permit card playing at the centers they would not be able to play for high stakes. This explains why the Brooklyn Jewish Center, the B'nai Jeshurun Community House, the Anshe Hesed House are not utilized by the members of those institutions. Of what earthly use then will the synagogue be? With the number of worshippers continually on the wane and with cultural activities holding the interest of a very limited number, the folly and the waste of putting up structures which are seldom used and which involve a tremendous overhead will sooner or later become too flagrant to be permitted to go on.

At the meeting of the TI Faculty today I suggested the revision of the entire curriculum. The present curriculum omits entirely the study of Aggudah and Medieval Jewish Literature. I pleaded for an organic curriculum in which the thought life of the whole of Judaism be



given a place. My contention was that it should be our aim to develop in the students a Jewish consciousness which is both national and religious. The circumstance that about 30% is devoted to modern Hebrew literature produces/in our students a distorted type of Jewish consciousness.

The arguments advanced against my suggestion were 1) (Scharfstein) that an attempt to give the students a conception of every element of Jewish culture results in a superficial knowledge of each of those elements and a thorough knowledge of none. 2) The purpose of the courses in modern Hebrew is not merely to teach literature but to use it as a means of cultivating the use of Hebrew in speaking and writing. 3) (Bavli) Jewish consciousness is not acquired through comprehensive knowledge but through ability to use the media of Jewish self-expression. Moreover the question of inherent interest is a primary consideration. 4(Dinin) Courses in belles lettres include study of authors whose writings came under that head only and not those whose writings have a value for content only.

Every one, however, conceded that the study of Aggudah was indispensable (despite the difficulty presented by the unorganized condition of the material.)

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Friday, December 6, 1929

When I see a whole day passing without my getting a whit nearer to the attainment of my goal - some publication - I am all on edge. The fact that I am writing a sermon which deals with some phase of self-control instead of augmenting my own self-control only puts it under greater strain. The prayerful mood into which Orchard's prayers put me yesterday is entirely worn off.

* * *

Saturday night, December 7, 1929

The attendance at services this morning was 150 with men in overwhelming majority. The subject of my sermon was "Why Make Enemies?" with special reference to the play Jew Suss.

In the afternoon Albert Rosenblatt, Joseph Levy and Jacob Levy met at my house to discuss the preparations for the dinner to be given by the SAJ on Jan. 12. In order to prevent the dinner from degenerating into a talk fest indulged in by all kinds of notables about the wonderful things I am supposed to have achieved, things they either know or care nothing about, I asked H. Liebovitz not to invite outsiders. At first Joe Levy didn't take kindly to the idea, but after a great deal of talking I got him to adopt it.

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Sunday, December 8, 1929

It seems to me that the idea I hit upon last Thursday night has some far reaching implications. The idea is that since the destruction of the Second Commonwealth the Jews have been constrained to resort to religion as the only medium of national self-expression. What made it possible for religion to function in such a capacity was the fact that it was based on the conception of God as having revealed made Himself and having/~~made~~ His will known to Israel. Had there been any doubt entertained as to the verity of the revelation, the Jewish religion/~~could~~ never have been made to serve the purpose of national self-expression. It is equally inconceivable that religion based upon a reasoned conception of God could ever have functioned in that way, for whereas the tradition concerning the self-revelation of God was bound to have a unifying effect, a philosophic approach to the idea of God would have exerted a divisive influence. Once the tradition of the self-revelation of God was consciously or unconsciously felt to have

